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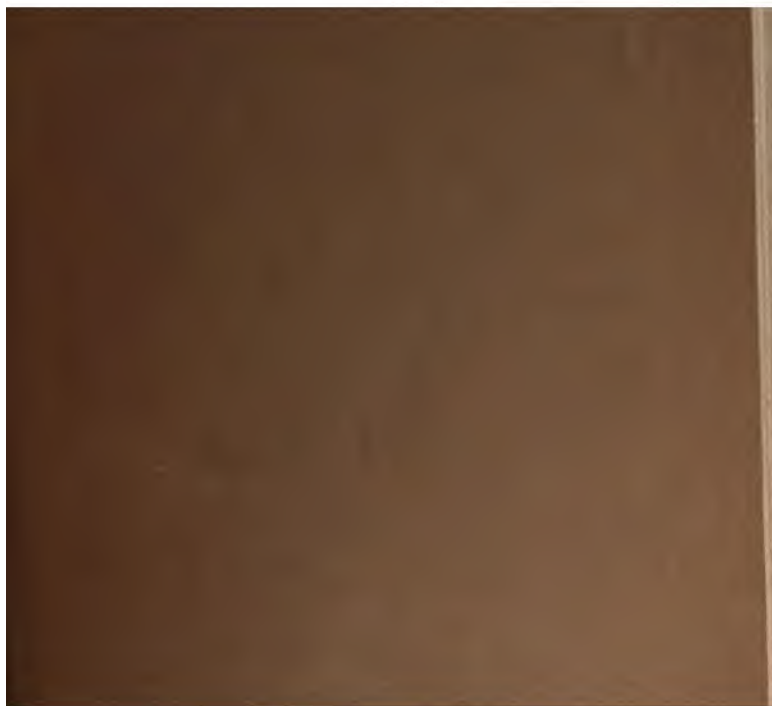
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HANNAH THURSTON:

A

TORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.

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No. 974

BY BAYARD TAYLOR.

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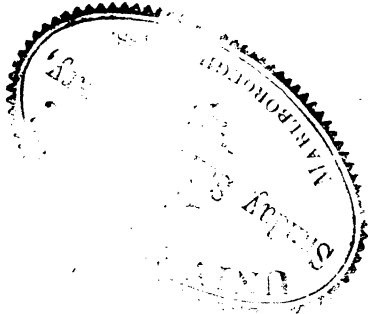
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Northern and Western States. Whether those
are to be commended or condemned, the personages
story are alone responsible for them. I beg leave
more, to protest against the popular superstition
author must necessarily represent himself in one
another. I am neither Mr. Woodbury, Mr. Wa
Seth Wattles.

This is all I have to say. The intelligent readers
require no further explanation, and you no further
ranchise of how steadily and faithfully I am your friend

BAYARD TAYLOR

WOOD'S HOTEL, LONDON,
August, 1863.



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HANNAH THURSTON.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH WE ATTEND THE GREAT SEWING-UNION AT PTOLEMY.

NEVER before had the little society of Ptolemy known so animated a season. For an inland town, the place could not at any time be called dull, and, indeed, impressed the stranger with a character of exuberant life, on being compared with other towns in the neighborhood. Mulligansville on the east, Anacreon on the north, and Atauga City on the west, all fierce rivals of nearly equal size, groaned over the ungodly cheerfulness of its population, and held up their hands whenever its name was mentioned. But, at the particular time whereof we write—November, 1852—the ordinarily mild flow of life in Ptolemy was unusually quickened by the formation of the great Sewing-Union. This was a new social phenomenon, which many persons looked upon as a long stride in the direction of the Millennium. If, however, you should desire an opposite view, you have but to mention the subject to any Mulligansvillain, any Anacreontic, or any Atauga citizen. The simple fact is, that the various sewing-circles of Ptolemy—three in number, and working for very different ends—had agreed to hold their meetings at the same time and place, and labor in company. It was a social arrangement which substituted one

large gathering, all the more lively and interesting from its mixed constitution, in place of three small and somewhat monotonous circles. The plan was a very sensible one, and it must be said, to the credit of Ptolemy, that there are very few communities of equal size in the country where it could have been carried into effect.

First, the number of members being taken as the test of relative importance, there was the Ladies' Sewing-Circle, for raising a fund to assist in supporting a Mission at Jutnapore. It was drawn mainly from the congregation of the Rev. Lemuel Styles. Four spinsters connected with this circle had a direct interest in four children of the converted Telugu parents. There was a little brown Eliza Clancy, an Ann Parrott, and a Sophia Stevenson, in that distant Indian sheepfold; while the remaining spinster, Miss Ruhaney Goodwin, boasted of a (spiritual) son, to whom she had given the name of her deceased brother Elisha. These ladies were pleasantly occupied in making three mousseline-de-laine frocks, an embroidered jacket, and four half-dozens of pocket handkerchiefs for their little Telugu children, and their withered bosoms were penetrated with a secret thrill of the lost maternal instinct, which they only dared to indulge in connection with such pious and charitable labors.

The second Circle was composed of ladies belonging to the Cimmerian church, who proposed getting up a village fair, the profits of which should go towards the repair of the Parsonage, now sadly dilapidated. Mrs. Waldo, the clergyman's wife, was at the head of this enterprise. Her ambition was limited to a new roof and some repairs in the plastering, and there was a good prospect that the Circle would succeed in raising the necessary sum. This, however, was chiefly owing to Mrs. Waldo's personal popularity. Ptolemy was too small a place, and the Cimmerians too insignificant a sect, for the Church, out of its own resources, to accomplish much for its shepherd.

Lastly, there was the Sewing-Circle for the Anti-Slave

fair, which was limited to five or six families. For the previous ten years, this little community, strong in the faith, had prepared and forwarded their annual contribution, not discouraged by the fact that the circulation of their beloved special organ did not increase at the Ptolemy Post-Office, nor that their petitions to Congress were always referred, and never acted upon. They had outlived the early persecution, and could no longer consider themselves martyrs. The epithets "Infidel!" "Fanatic!" and "Amalgamationist!" had been hurled at them until their enemies had ceased, out of sheer weariness, and they were a little surprised at finding that their importance diminished in proportion as their neighbors became tolerant. The most earnest and enthusiastic of the little band were Gulielma Thurston, a Quaker widow, and her daughter Hannah; Mrs. Merryfield, the wife of a neighboring farmer, and Seth Wattles, a tailor in the village. Notwithstanding the smallness of this circle, its members, with one exception, were bright, clear-minded, cheerful women, and as the suspicions of their infidelity had gradually been allayed (mainly by their aptness in Biblical quotation), no serious objection was made to their admittance into the Union.

The proposition to unite the Circles came originally, we believe, from Mrs. Waldo, whose sectarian bias always gave way before the social instincts of her nature. The difficulty of carrying it into execution was much lessened by the fact that all the families were already acquainted, and that, fortunately, there was no important enmity existing between any two of them. Besides, there is a natural instinct in women which leads them to sew in flocks and enliven their labor by the discussion of patterns, stuffs, and prices. The Union, with from twenty-five to forty members in attendance, was found to be greatly more animated and attractive than either of the Circles, separately, had been. Whether more work was accomplished, is a doubtful question; but, if not, it made little difference in the end. The naked Telugus would not suffer from a scantier supply of clothing; the Cimmerians

would charge outrageous prices for useless articles, in any case: nor would *The Slavery Annihilator* perish for want of support, if fewer pen-wipers, and book-marks, inscribed with appropriate texts, came from Ptolemy.

The Sewing-Union was therefore pronounced a great social success, and found especial favor in the eyes of the gentlemen, who were allowed to attend "after tea," with the understanding that they would contribute something to either of the three groups, according to their inclinations. Mrs. Waldo, by general acquiescence, exercised a matronly supervision over the company, putting down any rising controversy with a gentle pat of her full, soft hand, and preventing, with cheerful tyranny, the continual tendency of the gentlemen to interrupt the work of the unmarried ladies. She was the oleaginous solvent, in which the hard yolk of the Mission Fund, the vinegar of the Cimmerians, and the mustard of the Abolitionists lost their repellant qualities and blended into a smooth social compound. She had a very sweet, mellow, rounded voice, and a laugh as comforting to hear as the crackling of a wood-fire on the open hearth. Her greatest charm, however, was her complete unconsciousness of her true value. The people of Ptolemy, equally unconscious of this subduing and harmonizing quality which she possessed, and seeing their lionesses and lambs sewing peaceably together, congratulated themselves on their own millennial promise. Of course everybody was satisfied—even the clergymen in Mulligansville and Anacreon, who attacked the Union from their pulpits, secretly thankful for such a near example of falling from the stiff, narrow, and carefully-enclosed ways of grace.

It was the third meeting of the Union, and nearly all the members were present. Their session was held at the house of Mr. Hamilton Bue, Agent of the "Saratoga Mutual" for the town of Ptolemy, and one of the Directors of the Bank at Tiberius, the county-seat. Mrs. Hamilton Bue was interested in the contribution for the mission at Jutnapore, and the Rev. Lemuel Styles, pastor of the principal church in the village,

had been specially invited to come "before tea," for the purpose of asking a blessing on the bountiful table of the hostess. The parlor, large as it was (for Ptolemy), had been somewhat overcrowded during the afternoon; therefore, anticipating a large arrival of gentlemen in the evening, Mrs. Bue had the tables transferred from the sitting-room to the kitchen, locked the hall door, and thus produced a suite of three apartments, counting the hall itself as one. The guests were admitted at the side-entrance, commonly used by the family. Two or three additional lamps had been borrowed, and the general aspect of things was so bright and cheerful that Mr. Styles whispered to Mrs. Hamilton Bue: "Really, I am afraid this looks a little like levity."

"But it's trying to the eyes to sew with a dim light," said she; "and we want to do a good deal for The Fund this evening."

"Ah! *that*, indeed!" he ejaculated, smiling blandly as he contemplated Miss Eliza Clancy and Miss Ann Parrott, who were comparing the dresses for their little brown namesakes.

"I think it looks better to be gored," said the former.

"Well—I don't know but what it does, with that figure," remarked Miss Parrott, "but my Ann's a slim, growing girl, and when you've tucks—and I'm making two of 'em—it seems better to *pleat*."

"How will this do, Miss Eliza?" asked Mrs. Waldo, coming up at the moment with a heavy knitted snood of crimson wool, which she carefully adjusted over her own abundant black hair. The effect was good, it cannot be denied. The contrast of colors was so pleasing that the pattern of the snood became quite a subordinate affair.

"Upon my word, very pretty!" said the lady appealed to.

"Pity you haven't knit it for yourself, it suits you so well," Miss Parrott observed.

"I'd rather take it to stop the leak in my best bed-room," Mrs. Waldo gayly rejoined, stealing a furtive glance at her

was long and coarsely constructed, with blunt end and thick nostrils, and his lips, though short, of that peculiar, shapeless formation, which prevents a clear line of division between them. Heavy, and of a pale purplish-red color, they seemed to run together at the inner edges. His hands were large and hanging, and all his joints apparently knobby and loose. His skin had that appearance of oily clamminess which belongs to such an organization. Men of this character seem to be made of sticks and putty. There is no nerve, no elasticity, no keen, alert, impressible life in any part of their bodies.

Leaving the ladies of the Fund to hear Mrs. Boerum's last letter describing the condition of her school at Jutnapore, and the Cimmerians to consult about the arrangements for their Fair, we will join this group in the hall. Mrs. Waldo had just taken her seat for the seventh time, saying: "Well, I never shall get any thing done, at this rate!"—when her attention was arrested by hearing Hannah Thurston say, in answer to some remark of Mrs. Merryfield:

"It is too cheerful a place, not to be the home of cheerful and agreeable people."

"Oh, you are speaking of Lakeside, are you not?" she asked.

"Yes, they say it's sold," said Mrs. Merryfield; "have you heard of it?"

"I believe Mr. Waldo mentioned it at dinner. It's a Mr. Woodbury, or some such name. And rich. He was related, in some way, to the Dennisons. He's expected immediately. I'm glad of it, for I want to put him under contribution. Oh, how beautiful! Did you first copy the pattern from the leaves, Hannah, or do you keep it in your head?"

"Woodbury? Related to the Dennisons?" mused Mrs. Merryfield. "Bless me! It can't be little Maxwell—Max, we always called him, that used to be there summers—well, nigh twenty years ago, at least. But you were not here then, Mrs. Waldo—nor you, neither, Hannah. I heard afterwards that he went to Calcutty. I remember him very

well—a smart, curly-headed youngster, but knowed nothing about farming. Him and my poor Absalom”—here she smothered a rising sigh—“used to be a good deal with other.”

An unusual stir in the sitting-room interrupted the conversation.

There were exclamations—noises of moving chairs—indistinct phrases—and presently the strong voice of the Hon. Zeno Harder was heard: “Very happy to make your acquaintance, Sir—*very* happy!” Mrs. Waldo slipped to the door and peeped in, telegraphing her observations in whispers to the little party behind the stairs. “There’s Mr. Hammond—the lawyer, you know, from Tiberius, and another gentleman—a stranger. Tall and sunburnt, with a moustache—but I like his looks. Ah!” Here she darted back to her seat. “Would you believe it?—the very man we were talking about—Mr. Woodbury!”

In accordance with the usages of Ptolemy society, the newcomers were taken in charge by the host, and formally introduced to every person present. In a few minutes the round of the sitting-room was completed and the party entered the hall. Miss Thurston, looking up with a natural curiosity, encountered a pair of earnest brown eyes, which happened, at the moment, to rest mechanically upon her. Mr. Hamilton Bue advanced and performed his office. The stranger bowed with easy self-possession and a genial air, which asserted his determination to enjoy the society. Mrs. Waldo, who was no respecter of persons—in fact, she often declared that she would not be afraid of Daniel Webster—cordially gave him her hand, exclaiming: “We were this minute talking of you, Mr. Woodbury! And I wished you were here, that I might levy a contribution for our Sewing-Circle. But you’re going to be a neighbor, and so I’ll ask it in earnest, next time.”

“Why not now?” said the gentleman, taking out his purse. “First thoughts are often best, and you know the

of Ptolemy, never to sing until somebody else has first sung. to encourage you. The difficulty is, to find the encourager.

Mrs. Waldo seized upon Seth Wattles, who, nothing loth, commenced in a gritty bass voice :

“Why-ee dooz the why-eet man follah mee pawth,
Like the ha-ound on the ty-eeger's tra-hack?
Dooz the flu-hush on my da-hark cheek waken his wrawth—
Dooz he co-hovet the bow a-hat mee ba-hack?”

“What in the world is the song about?” whispered Mr. Woodbury.

“It's the Lament of the Indian Hunter,” said Mrs. Waldo: “he always sings it. Now comes the chorus: it's queer: listen!”

Thereupon, from the cavernous throat of the singer, issued a series of howls in the minor key, something in this wise :

“Yo-ho—yo-ho! Yo-HO-O—yo-ho-ho-ho-ho!”

“After this,” thought Woodbury, “they can bear to hear an old song, though a thousand times repeated.” And being again pressed, he gave simply, without any attempt at brilliancy of execution: “The Harp of Tara.”

There was profound silence, as his voice, strung with true masculine fibre, rang through the rooms. Generally, the least intellectual persons sing with the truest and most touching expression, because voice and intellect are rarely combined: but Maxwell Woodbury's fine organ had not been given to him at the expense of his brain. It was a lucky chance of nature. His hearers did not really know how admirably he interpreted that sigh of the Irish heart, but they were pleased, and not niggardly in their expressions of delight.

More songs were called for, and refused. There was the usual coaxing, and a shocking prevalence of hoarseness, combined with sudden loss of memory. One young lady commenced with “Isle” (which she pronounced *eye-heel*) “of Beauty,” but broke down at the end of the first verse, and all the cries of: “Do go on!” “It's so pretty!” could not encour-

age her to resume. Finally some one, spying Hannah Thurston, who had folded up her embroidery and was sitting in a shaded corner, cried out:

"Oh, Miss Thurston! Give us that song you sang the last time—that one about the mountains, you know."

Miss Thurston started, as if aroused out of a profound revery, while a flitting blush, delicate and transient as the shadow of a rose tossed upon marble, visited her face. She had felt and followed, word by word and tone by tone, the glorious Irish lay. The tragic pathos of the concluding lines—

"For freedom now so seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives
Is when some heart indignant breaks,
To show that still she lives!"

—thrilled and shook her with its despairing solemnity. What a depth of betrayed trust, of baffled aspiration, it revealed! Some dormant sentiment in her own heart leapt up and answered it, with that quick inner pang, which would be a cry were it expressed in sound. Yet was the despair which the melody suggested of a diviner texture than joy. It was that sadness of the imaginative nature which is half triumph, because the same illumination which reveals the hopelessness of its desires reveals also their beauty and their divinity.

The request addressed to her was a shock which recalled her to herself. It was so warmly seconded that refusal would have been ungracious, and a true social instinct told her that her revery, though involuntary, was out of place. She profited by the little delay which ensued in order to secure silence—for in our country communities silence always *precedes* the song—to recover her full self-possession. There was no tremor in her voice, which soared, with the words, into a still, clear ether, in which the pictures of the song stood out pure, distinct, and sublime. It was one of those lyrics of Mrs. Hemans, which suggest the trumpet at woman's lips—shorn of its rough battle-snarl, its fierce notes tenderly muf-

fled, but a trumpet still. She sang, with the bride of the Alpine hunter :

“Thy heart is in the upper world,
And where the chamois bound;
Thy heart is where the mountain-fir
Shakes with the torrent's sound:
And where the snow-peaks gleam like stars
In the stillness of the air,
And where the lawine's voice is heard,—
Hunter, thy heart is there!”

It was rather musical declamation, than singing. Her voice, pure, sweet, and strong, distinctly indicated the melody, instead of giving it positively, beyond the possibility of a mistaken semitone. It was a ringing chant of that “upper world” of the glaciers, where every cry or call is followed by a musical echo,—where every sound betrays the thin air and the boundless space. Hannah Thurston sang it with a vision of Alpine scenery in her brain. She saw, gleaming in the paler sunshine, beneath the black-blue heaven, the sharp horns of frosted silver, the hanging ledges of short summer grass, the tumbled masses of gray rock, and the dust of snow from falling avalanches. Hence, he who had once seen these things in their reality, saw them again while listening to her. She knew not, however, her own dramatic power: it was enough that she gave pleasure.

Maxwell Woodbury's eyes brightened, as the bleak and lofty landscapes of the Bernese Oberland rose before him. Over the dark fir-woods and the blue ice-caverns of the Rosenlaui glacier, he saw the jagged pyramid of the Wetterhorn, toppling in the morning sky; and involuntarily asked himself what was the magic which had started that half-forgotten picture from the chambers of his memory. How should this pale, quiet girl who, in a musical sense, was no singer, and who had assuredly never seen the Alps, have caught the voice which haunts their desolate glory? But these were questions which came afterwards. The concluding

verse, expressing only the patience and humility of love in the valley, blurred the sharp crystal of the first impression and brought him back to the Sewing-Union without a rude shock of transition. He cordially thanked the singer—an act rather unusual in Ptolemy at that time, and hence a grateful surprise to Hannah Thurston, to whom his words conveyed a more earnest meaning than was demanded by mere formal courtesy.

By this time the assembled company had become very genial and unconstrained. The Rev. Lemuel Styles had entirely forgotten the levity of Mrs. Bue's illumination, and even indulged in good-humored badinage (of a perfectly mild and proper character) with Mrs. Waldo. The others were gathered into little groups, cheerfully chatting—the young gentlemen and ladies apart from the married people: Scandal was sugar-coated, in order to hide its true character: love put on a bitter and prickly outside, to avoid the observation of others: all the innocent disguises of Society were in as full operation as in the ripened atmosphere of great cities.

The nearest approach to a discord was in a somewhat heated discussion on the subject of Slavery, which grew up between Seth Wattles and the Hon. Zeno Harder. The latter was vehement in his denunciation of the Abolitionists, to which the former replied by quoting the Declaration of Independence. "The two voices—either of them alike unpleasant to a sensitive ear—finally became loud enough to attract the attention of Mrs. Waldo, who had a keen scent for opportunities for the exercise of her authority.

"Come, come!" she cried, placing one hand on Seth's shoulder, while she threatened the Honorable Zeno with the other: "this is forbidden ground. The Sewing-Union would never hold together, if we allowed such things. Besides, what's the use? You two would talk together all night, I'll warrant, and be no nearer agreeing in the morning."

"No," cried Seth, "because your party politicians ignore the questions of humanity!"

"And your fanatical abstractionists never look at any thing in a practical way!" rejoined the Honorable Zeno.

"And both are deficient in a sense of propriety—I shall have to say, if you don't stop," was Mrs. Waldo's ready comment.

This little episode had attracted a few spectators, who were so evidently on Mrs. Waldo's side, that "the Judge," as the Hon. Zeno was familiarly called, at once saw the politic course, and rising magnificently, exclaimed: "Although we don't *advocate* Women's Rights, we *yield* to woman's authority." Then, bowing with corpulent condescension, he passed away. Seth Wattles, having no longer an opponent, was condemned to silence.

In the mean time, it had been whispered among the company that the next meeting of the Union would be held at the Merryfield farm-house, a mile and a half from Ptolemy. This had been arranged by the prominent ladies, after a good deal of consultation. Mr. Merryfield still belonged to the congregation of the Rev. Lemuel Styles, although not in very good repute. His farm-house was large and spacious, and he was an excellent "provider," especially for his guests. Moreover, he was the only one of the small clan of Abolitionists, who could conveniently entertain the Union,—so that in him were discharged all the social obligations which the remaining members could fairly exact. The four spinsters, indeed, had exchanged patient glances, as much as to say: "This is a cross which we must needs bear." Mr. Merryfield, be it known, had refused to contribute to Foreign Missions, on the ground that we had already too many black heathen at home. The younger persons, nevertheless, were very well satisfied, and thus the millennial advance of Ptolemy was not interrupted.

The more staid guests had now taken leave, and there was presently a general movement of departure. The ladies put on their bonnets and shawls in the best bedroom up-stairs, and the gentlemen picked out their respective hats and coats from the miscellaneous heap on the kitchen settee. The hall-door

was unlocked to facilitate egress, and lively groups lingered on the stairs, in the doorway, and on the piazza. The gentlemen dodged about to secure their coveted privilege of escort: now and then a happy young pair slipped away in the belief that they were unnoticed: there were calls of "Do come and see us, now!"—last eager whispers of gossip, a great deal of superfluous female kissing, and the final remarks to Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Bue: "Good-bye! we've had a *nice* time!"—as the company filtered away.

When the last guest had disappeared, Mr. Hamilton Bue carefully closed and locked the doors, and then remarked to his wife, who was engaged in putting out the extra lamps: "Well, Martha, I think we've done very well, though I say it that shouldn't. Mr. Styles liked your tea, and the cake must have been pretty good, judging from the way they stowed it out of sight."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bue; "I was afraid at one time, there wouldn't be enough to go round. It's well I made up my mind, at the last minute, to bake five instead of four. Molasses is so high."

"Oh, what's the odds of two shillings more or less," her husband consolingly remarked, "when you've got to make a regular spread? Besides, I guess I'll clear expenses, by persuading Woodbury to insure his house in our concern. Denisons always took the Etna."

to the little Arbutus. She, however, was carried away by a malignant fever, in the first year of her second marriage. The widower, who both mourned and missed her, cherished her child with a conscientious fidelity, and it was quite as much from a sense of duty towards the boy, as from an inclination of the heart, that he married Miss Fortitude Winterbottom, a tall, staid, self-reliant creature, verging on spinsterhood.

The Fates, however, seemed determined to interfere with Jason Babb's connubial plans; but the next time it was upon himself, and not upon his wife, that the lot fell. Having no children of his own, by either wife, he besought Fortitude, with his latest breath, to be both father and mother to the doubly-orphaned little Bute Wilson. It must be admitted that Mrs. Babb faithfully performed her promise. The true feeling of parental tenderness had never been granted to her, and the sense of responsibility—*of ownership*—which came in its stead—was a very mild substitute; but it impressed the boy, at least, with a consciousness of care and protection, which satisfied his simple nature. Mrs. Dennison, with her kind voice, and gentle, resigned old face, seemed much more the mother, while Mrs. Babb, with her peremptory ways and strict idea of discipline, unconsciously assumed for him the attitude of a father. The latter had come to Lakeside at a time when Mr. Dennison's confirmed feebleness required his wife to devote herself wholly to his care. Mrs. Babb, therefore, took charge of the house, and Arbutus, at first a younger companion of Henry Dennison, afterwards an active farm-boy, finally developed into an excellent farmer, and had almost the exclusive management of the estate for some years before Mrs. Dennison's death.

Thus these two persons, with an Irish field-hand, had been the only occupants of Lakeside, during the summer and autumn. Arbutus, or Bute, as he was universally called in the neighborhood, was well-pleased with the news of Mr. Woodbury's purchase. He remembered him, indistinctly, as the "town-boy" who gave him his first top and taught him how

to spin it, though the big fellow couldn't tell a thrush's egg from a robin's, and always said "tortoise" instead of "tortle." Bute thought they'd get along together somehow—or, if they didn't, *he* could do as well somewheres else, he reckoned. Nevertheless, he felt anxious that the owner should receive a satisfactory impression on his arrival, and busied himself, with Patrick's assistance, in "setting every thing to rights" about the barn and out-houses.

After all, there was scarcely need of such hurried preparation. Mr. Hammond and Woodbury, detained by some necessary formalities of the law, did not leave Tiberius until the afternoon of that day. The town being situated at the outlet of Atauga Lake, they took the little steamer to Atauga City, near its head, in preference to the long road over the hills. The boat, with a heavy load of freight, made slow progress, and it was dusk before they passed the point on the eastern shore, beyond which Lakeside is visible from the water. On reaching Ptolemy by the evening stage from Atauga City, Maxwell Woodbury found the new "Ptolemy House" so bright and cheerful, that he immediately proposed their remaining for the night, although within four miles of their destination.

"I have a fancy for approaching the old place by daylight," said he to his companion. "Here begins my familiar ground, and I should be sorry to lose the smallest test of memory. Besides, I am not sure what kind of quarters I should be able to offer you, on such short notice."

"Let us stay, then, by all means," said the lawyer. "I can appreciate feelings, although I am occupied entirely with *deeds*." Here he quietly chuckled, and was answered by a roar from the landlord, who came up in time to hear the remark.

"Ha! ha! Good, Mr. Hammond!" exclaimed the latter. "Very happy to entertain you, gentlemen. Mr. Woodbury can have the Bridal Chamber, if he likes. But you should go to the Great Sewing-Union, gentlemen. You will find all

constitution was rather delicate when I was young, and Mrs. Dennison, who was a distant relative of my father, and sometimes visited us in New York, persuaded him to let me try the air of Lakeside. Henry was about my own age, and we soon became great friends. The place was a second home to me, thenceforth, until my father's death. Even after I went to Calcutta, I continued to correspond with Henry, but my last letter from Lakeside was written by his mother, after his body was brought home from Mexico."

"Yes," said Mr. Hammond, "the old lady fairly broke down after that. Henry was a fine fellow and a promising officer, and I believe she would have borne his loss better, had he fallen in battle. But he lingered a long time in the hospital, and she was just beginning to hope for his recovery, when the news of his death came instead. But see! there is Roaring Brook. Do you hear the noise of the fall? How loud it is this morning!"

The hill, curving rapidly to the eastward, rose abruptly from the meadows in a succession of shelving terraces, the lowest of which was faced with a wall of dark rock, in horizontal strata, but almost concealed from view by the tall forest trees which grew at its base. The stream, issuing from a glen which descended from the lofty upland region to the eastward of the lake, poured itself headlong from the brink of the rocky steep, —a glittering silver thread in summer, a tawny banner of angry sound in the autumn rains. Seen through the hazy air, its narrow white column seemed to stand motionless between the pines, and its mellowed thunder to roll from some region beyond the hills.

Woodbury, who had been looking steadily across the meadows to the north, cried out: "It is the same—it has not yet run itself dry! Now we shall see Lakeside; but no—yet I certainly used to see the house from this point. Ah! twenty years! I had forgotten that trees cannot stand still; that ash, or whatever it is, has quite filled up the gap. I am afraid I shall find greater changes than this."

kitchen, which she had cut up the evening before, for a fricassee, and which were thus rendered unfit for roasting. "Why, he's a perfect stranger!" "If there's only time to make a pie of 'em!" were the two thoughts which crossed each other in her brain.

"Mrs. Babb! there's no mistaking who *you* are!" exclaimed Woodbury, as he hastened with outstretched hand up the flagged walk.

The old housekeeper gave him her long, bony hand in return, and made an attempt at a courtesy, a thing which she had not done for so long that one of her knee-joints cracked with the effort. "Welcome, Sir!" said she, with becoming gravity. Woodbury thought she did not recognize him.

"Why, don't you remember Max.?" he asked.

"Yes, I recollect you as you was. And now I come to look, your eyes is jist the same. Dear, dear!" and in spite of herself two large tears slowly took their way down her lank cheeks. "If Miss Dennison and Henry could be here!" Then she wiped her eyes with her hand, rather than spoil the corner of her black silk apron. Stiffening her features the next moment, she turned away, exclaiming in a voice unnecessarily sharp: "Arbutus, why don't you put away the horse?"

The gentlemen entered the house. The hall-door had evidently not been recently used, for the lock grated with a sound of rust. The sitting-room on the left and the library beyond, were full of hazy sunshine and cheerful with the crackling of fires on the open hearth. Dust was nowhere to be seen, but the chairs stood as fixedly in their formal places as if screwed to the floor, and the old books seemed to be glued together in regular piles. None of the slight tokens of habitual occupation caught the eye—no pleasant irregularity of domestic life,—a newspaper tossed here, a glove there, a chair placed obliquely to a favorite window, or a work-stand or *foot-stool* drawn from its place. Mrs. Babb, it is true, with a

desperate attempt at ornament, had gathered the most presentable of the chrysanthemums, with some sprigs of arbovitæ, and stuck them into an old glass flower-jar. Their pungent odor helped to conceal the faint musty smell which still lingered in the unused rooms.

"I think we will sit here, Mrs. Babb," said Woodbury, leading the way into the library. "It was always my favorite room," he added, turning to the lawyer, "and it has the finest view of the lake."

"I'm afeard that's all you'll have," the housekeeper grimly remarked. "Things is terrible upside-down: you come so onexpected. An empty house makes more bother than a full one. But you're here now, an' you'll have to take it sich as it is."

Therewith she retired to the kitchen, where Bute soon joined her.

"Well, Mother Forty," he asked, "how do you like his looks? He's no more changed than I am, only on th' outside. I don't s'pose he knows more than ever about farmin', but he's only got to let me alone and things 'll go right."

"Looks is nothin'," the housekeeper answered. "Handsome is that handsome does, I say. Don't whistle till you're out o' the woods, Bute. Not but what I'd ruther have him here than some o' them people down to Po'keepsy, that never took no notice o' *her* while she lived."

"There's no mistake, then, about his havin' bought the farm?"

"I guess not, but I'll soon see."

She presently appeared in the library, with a pitcher of cider and two glasses on a tray, and a plate of her best "jumbles." "There's a few bottles o' Madary in the cellar," she said; "but you know I can't take nothin' without *your* leave, Mr. Hammond—leastways, unless it's all fixed."

Woodbury, however, quietly answered: "Thank you, we will leave the wine until dinner. You can give us a meal, I presume, Mrs. Babb?"

"T wo'nt be what I'd like. I'd reckoned on a supper las' night, instid of a dinner to-day. Expect it 'll be pretty much pot-luck. However, I'll do what I can."

Mrs. Babb then returned to the kitchen, satisfied, at least, that Mr. Maxwell Woodbury was now really the master of Lakeside.

CHAPTER III.

AN EVENING OF GOSSIP, IN WHICH WE LEARN SOMETHING
ABOUT THE PERSONS ALREADY MENTIONED.

AFTER a long absence in India, Woodbury had come home to find all his former associations broken, even the familiar landmarks of his boyish life destroyed. His only near relative was an older sister, married some years before his departure, and now a stately matron, who was just beginning to enjoy a new importance in society from the beauty of her daughters. There was a small corner in her heart, it is true, for the exiled brother. The floor was swept, there; the room aired, and sufficient fire kept burning on the hearth, to take off the chill: but it was the chamber of an occasional guest rather than of an habitual inmate. She was glad to see him back again, especially as his manners were thoroughly refined and his wealth was supposed to be large (indeed, common report greatly magnified it): she would have lamented his death, and have worn becoming mourning for him—would even have persuaded her husband to assist him, had he returned penniless. In short, Woodbury could not complain of his reception, and the absence of a more intimate relation—of a sweet, sympathetic bond, springing from kinship of heart as well as of blood, was all the more lightly felt because such bond had never previously existed.

In the dreams of home which haunted him in lonely hours, on the banks of the Hoogly or the breezy heights of Darjeeling, Lakeside always first arose, and repeated itself most frequently and distinctly. "Aunt Dennison," as he was accustomed to call her, took the place, in his affectionate memory,

After dinner, Mr. Hammond paid them what was due from the estate. Bute turned the money over uneasily in his hand, grew red in the face, and avoided meeting the eye of the new owner. Mrs. Babb straightened her long spine, took out a buckskin purse, and, having put the money therein, began rubbing the steel clasp with the corner of her apron. Woodbury, then, with a few friendly words, expressed his pleasure at having found them in charge of Lakeside, and his desire that each should continue to serve him in the same capacity as before.

Mrs. Babb did not betray, by the twitch of a muscle, the relief she felt. On the contrary, she took credit to herself for accepting her good fortune. "There's them that would like to have me," said she. "Mrs. Dennison never havin' said nothin' ag'in my housekeepin', but the reverse; and I a'n't bound to stay, for want of a good home; but *somebody* must keep house for ye, and I'd hate to see things goin' to wrack, after keerin' for 'em, a matter o' twenty year. Well—I'll stay, I guess, and do my best, as I've always done it."

"*Et tu*, Bute?" said Mr. Hammond, whose small puns had gained him a reputation for wit, in Tiberius.

Bute understood the meaning, not the words. "I'm glad Mr. Max. wants me," he answered, eagerly. "I'd hate to leave the old place, though I'm able to get my livin' most anywheres. But it'd be like leavin' home—and jist now, with that two-year old colt to break, and a couple o' steers that I'm goin' to yoke in the spring—it wouldn't seem natural, like. Mr. Max. and me was boys together here, and I guess we can hitch teams without kickin' over the traces."

After arranging for an inventory and appraisal of the live stock, farming implements, and the greater part of the furniture, which Woodbury decided to retain, Mr. Hammond took his departure. Mrs. Babb prepared her tea at the usual early hour. After some little hesitation, she took her seat at the table, but evaded participation in the meal. Mr. Woodbury sat much longer than she was accustomed to see, in the people

of Ptolemy: he sipped his tea slowly, and actually accepted a fourth cup. Mrs. Babb's gratification reached its height when he began to praise her preserved quinces, but on his unthinkingly declaring them to be "better than ginger," her grimness returned.

"Better than ginger! I should think so!" was her mental exclamation.

Throwing himself into the old leather arm-chair before the library fire, Woodbury enjoyed the perfect stillness of the November evening. The wind had fallen, and the light of a half-moon lay upon the landscape. The vague illumination, the shadowy outlines of the distant hills, and that sense of isolation from the world which now returned upon him, gratefully brought back the half-obliterated moods of his Indian life. He almost expected to hear the soft whish of the punka above his head, and to find, suddenly, the "hookah-burdar" at his elbow. A cheerful hickory-fed flame replaced the one, and a ripe Havana cigar the other; but his repose was not destined to be left undisturbed. "The world" is not so easy to escape. Even there, in Ptolemy, it existed, and two of its special agents (self-created) already knocked at the door of Lakeside.

The housekeeper ushered Mr. Hamilton Bue and the Hon. Zeno Harder into the library. The latter, as Member of the Legislature, considered that this call was due, as, in some sort, an official welcome to his district. Besides, his next aim was the State Senate, and the favor of a new President, whose wealth would give him influence, could not be secured too soon. Mr. Bue, as the host of the previous evening, enjoyed an advantage over the agent of the "Etna," which he was slow to use. His politeness was composed of equatorial part curiosity and the "Saratoga Mutual."

"We thought, Sir," said the Hon. Zeno, entering, "your first evening here might be a little lonesome, and we are glad to have company for an hour or so."

The Member was a coarse, obese man, with heavy

thick, flat lips, small eyes, bald crown, and a voice which had been made harsh and aggressive in its tone by much vigorous oratory in the open air. The lines of his figure were rounded, it is true, but it was the lumpy roundness of a potato rather than the swelling, opulent curves of well-padded muscle. Mr. Hamilton Bue, in contrast to him, seemed to be made of angles. His face and hands had that lean dryness which suggests a body similarly constructed, and makes us thankful for the invention of clothing. He was a prim, precise business man, as the long thin nose and narrow lips indicated, with a trace of weakness in the retreating chin. Neither of these gentlemen possessed a particle of that grapy bloom of ripe manhood, which tells of generous blood in either cell of the double heart. In one the juice was dried up; in the other it had become thick and slightly rancid.

They were not the visitors whom Woodbury would have chosen, but the ostensible purpose of their call demanded acknowledgment. He therefore gave them a cordial welcome, and drew additional chairs in front of the fire. The Hon. Zeno, taking a cigar, elevated his feet upon the lower moulding of the wooden mantel-piece, spat in the fire, and remarked:

"You find Ptolemy changed, I dare say. Let me see—when were you here last? In '32? I must have been studying law in Tiberius at that time. Oh, it's scarcely the same place. So many went West after the smash in '37, and new people have come in—new people and new ideas, I may say."

"We have certainly shared in the general progression of the country, even during my residence here," said Mr. Hamilton Bue, carefully assuming his official style. "Ten years ago, there were but thirty-seven names on the books of the Saratoga Mutual. Now we count a hundred and thirteen. But there is a reason for it: the Company pays its loss punctually—most punctually."

Unconscious of this dexterous advertising, Woodbury

answered the Hon. Zeno: "Since I am to be, for a while, a member of your community, I am interested in learning something more about it. What are the new ideas you mentioned, Mr. Harder?"

"Well, Sir,—I can't exactly say that Hunkerism is a new thing in politics. I'm a Barnburner, you must know, and since the split it seems like new parties, though *we* hold on to the old principles. Then there's the Temperance Reform—swept every thing before it, at first, but slacking off just now. The Abolitionists, it's hardly worth while to count—there's so few of them—but they make a mighty noise. Go for Non-Resistance, Women's Rights, and all other Isms. So, you see, compared to the old times, when 'twas only Whig and Democrat, the deestricht is pretty well stirred up."

Mr. Bue, uncertain as to the views of his host upon some of the subjects mentioned, and keeping a sharp eye to his own interests, here remarked in a mild, placable tone: "I don't know that it does any harm. People must have their own opinions, and there's no law to hinder it. In fact, frequent discussion is a means of intellectual improvement."

"But what's the use of discussing what's contrary to Scriptur' and Reason?" cried the Hon. Zeno, in his out-door voice. "*Our* party is for Free Soil, and you can't go further under the Constitution,—so, what's the use in talking? Non-Resistance might be Christian enough, if all men was saints; but we've got to take things as we find 'em. When you're hit, hit back, if you want to do any good in these times. As for Women's Rights, it's the biggest humbug of all. A pretty mess we should be in, if it could be carried out! Think of my wife taking the stump against Mrs. Blackford, and me and him doing the washing and cooking!"

"Who was the Abolitionist—for such I took him to be—with whom you were talking, last evening, at Mr. Bue's?" Woodbury asked.

"Wattles—a tailor in Ptolemy—one of the worst fanatics among 'em!" the irate Zeno replied. "Believes in all the

Still, you must not expect immediate returns. It is only the lowest caste that is now reached, and the Christianizing of India must come, eventually, from the highest."

Rather than discuss a subject of which he was ignorant, the Hon. Zeno started a new topic. "By the way, the next meeting of the Sewing Union will be at Merryfield's. Shall you attend, Mr. Woodbury?"

"Yes. They are among the few persons who have kept me in good remembrance, though they, too, from what you have said, must be greatly changed since I used to play with their son Absalom. I am very sorry to hear of his death."

"It is a pity," replied the Member, biting off the end of a fresh cigar. "Absalom was really a fine, promising fellow, but they spoiled him with their Isms. They were Grahamites for a year or two—lived on bran bread and turnips, boiled wheat and dried apples. Absalom took up that and the water-cure, and wanted to become a patent first-class reformer. Now, Temperance is a good thing—though I can't quite go the Maine Law—but water inside of you and outside of you, summer and winter alike, isn't temperance, according to my idee. He had a spell of pleurisy, one winter, and doctored himself for it. His lungs were broken up, after that, and he went off the very next fall. They set a great deal of store by him."

"Is it possible that such delusions are held by intelligent persons?" exclaimed Woodbury, shocked as well as surprised. "I hope these theories are not included in the general progress of which Mr. Bue spoke. But I have almost forgotten my duty as a host. The nights are getting cold, gentlemen, and perhaps you will take a glass of wine."

The Hon. Zeno's small eyes twinkled, and his lips twitched liquorously. "Well—I don't care if I do," said he.

Mr. Hamilton Bue was silent, and slightly embarrassed. He had found it necessary to join the Temperance Society, because the reform was a popular one. He always went with the current as soon as it became too strong to stem con

but the temptation to indulge still lurked in his
It was evident that the Member, for his own
not mention the circumstance, and Mr. Wood-
probability, would never think of it again.

Mrs. Babb's "Madary" presently twinkled like
in the light of the wood-fire. Mr. Bue at first
sittingly, like a bather dipping his toes, with a
into the waters of a cold river; but having once
the bottom of the glass—so quickly, indeed, that it
own surprise—he made the next plunge with the
of a man accustomed to it.

will attend church, I presume, Mr. Woodbury?"

"Of course you have convictions."

only," Woodbury answered, without a clear idea of
meant by the word—"very strong ones."

course—it could not be otherwise. I shall be very
will now and then accept a seat in my pew. — Mr.

great authority on Galatians, and I am sure you
spiritual refreshment from his sermons."

The Hon. Zeno rose and commenced buttoning his
signal of departure. Growing confidential from his

month, he placed one hand affectionately on Wood-
shoulder, somewhat to the latter's disgust, and said:

"You are one of us, Woodbury, you must take an active
in political concerns. Great principles are at stake,

the country has need of men like you. Let me warn
the Hunkers—their game is nearly played out.

Most happy, Sir, to explain to you the condition of
You'll find me well posted up."

He took occasion to make a parting hint in the inter-
atoga Mutual. "If you wish to have your house

Woodbury," said he, "I shall be glad to send
bulletins. The Company is so well known, fortunately

me is a sufficient recommendation."

Mr. Woodbury stood on the verandah, watch-
drive down the maple avenue. As the sound

their wheels sank below the brow of the hill, the muffled voice of Roaring Brook came softly to him, across the dark meadows. A part of Atauga Lake threw back the light of the descending moon. "Here," thought he, "is the commencement of a new existence. It is not the old, boyish life of which I dreamed, but something very different. I foresee that I shall have to accustom myself to many features of this society, which are not attractive—some of them even repugnant—and perhaps the only counterbalancing delight left to me will be the enjoyment of this lovely scenery, the peace of this secluded life. Will that be sufficient? Or will these oaks and pines at last pall upon my eye, like the palms and banyans of the East? No: one cannot be satisfied with external resources. I must study, with a liberal human interest, the characteristics of this little community, however strange or repellant they may seem; and certainly, after making friends among the fossilized Brahmins, there must be a few among my fellow-Christians and fellow-countrymen, whom I can heartily respect and love. Those long Indian years must be placed in a closed Past, and I must adapt myself to habits and associations, which have become more foreign than familiar to me."

an affected habit of dropping the lids. Perhaps this was to conceal the unpleasant redness of their edges, for they were oftentimes so inflamed as to oblige her to suspend her occupation. Her ambition was, to become a teacher—a post for which she was not at all qualified. Hannah Thurston, however, had kindly offered to assist her in preparing herself for the coveted career.

What it was that attracted Bute Wilson to Miss Dilworth, he was unable to tell. Had the case been reversed, we should not wonder at it. Only this much was certain; her society was a torment to him, her absence a pain. He would have cut off his little finger for the privilege of just once lifting her in his strong arms, and planting a kiss square upon the provoking mouth, which, as if conscious of its surplus of sweetness, could say so many bitter things to him. Bute had never spoken to her of the feeling which she inspired in him. Why should he? She knew just how he felt, and he knew that she knew it. She played with him as he had many a time played with a big trout at the end of his line. Over and over again he had been on the point of giving her up, out of sheer worry and exhaustion of soul, when a sudden look from those downcast eyes, a soft word, half whispered in a voice whose deliberate sweetness tingled through him, from heart to finger-ends, bound him faster than ever. Miss Dilworth little suspected how many rocks she had sledged to pieces, how many extra swaths she had mowed in June, and shocks of corn she had husked in October, through Bute Wilson's arm. If Mr. Woodbury were a cunning employer, he would take measures to prolong this condition of suspense.

On the present occasion, the affected little minx was unusually gracious towards her victim. She had a keen curiosity to gratify. "Now, Bute," said she, as they started together towards Ptolemy, Bute leading Dick by the bridle; "I want you to tell me all about this Mr. Woodbury. What kind of a man is he?"

"He's only been with us three or four days. To be sure, I

knowed him as a boy, but that's long ago, and I *may* have to learn him over ag'in. It won't be a hard thing to do, though: he's a gentleman, if there ever was one. He's a man that'll always do what's right, if he knows how."

"I mean, Bute, how he looks. Tall or short? Is he handsome? Isn't he burnt very black, or is it worn off?"

"Not so many questions at once, Miss Carrie. He ain't blacker 'n I'd be now, if I was complected like him. Tall, you might call him—nigh two inches more'n I am, and a reg'lar pictur' of a man, though a bit thinner than he'd ought to be. But I dunno whether *you'd* call him handsome: women has sich queer notions. Now, there's that Seth Wattles, that you think sich a beauty—"

"Bute Wilson! You know I don't think *any* such thing! It's Seth's *mind* that I admire. There's such a *thing* as moral and intellectual beauty, but that you don't understand."

"No, hang it!—nor don't want to, if *he's* got in a man's doin' what he purtends to do—keepin' his work, whatever it is. If Seth Wattles lays tailor, let him *be* one: if he wants to be a moral and intellectual beauty, he may try *that*, for all I keer—but both to once't. I wish he'd make better trowsus, his business."

Miss Dilworth knew her own weakness, and careful ed entering into a discussion. She was vexed that phrases she had caught from Hannah Thurston, and had frequently used with much effect, had rattled her against the hard mail of Bute's common sense. At time she would have taken—or have seemed to take—at his rough speech; but she had not yet heard enough of Woodbury.

"Well, never mind Seth," she said, "you've not finished me about your new *master*."

If she had intended to prick Bute with this word, she failed. He quietly resumed the description: "Even *that I like* is handsome to me; but I think any woman

admire to see Mr. Max. He's got big brown eyes, like them o' the doe Master Harry used to have, and a straight nose, like one o' the plaster heads in the libery. He wears a beard on his upper lip, but no whiskers, and his hair is brown, and sort o' curlin'. He's a man that knows what he's about, and can make up his mind in five minutes, and looks you straight in the face when he talks; and if he'd a hard thing to say (though he's said nothin' o' the kind to me), he'd say it without flinchin', a little worse to your face than what he'd say behind y'r back. But what *I* like best in him, is, that he knows how to mind his own business, without botherin' himself about other folks's. You wouldn't ketch *him* a pitchin' into me because I chaw tobacco, like Seth Wattles did, with all his moral and intellectual beauty."

"Oh, but, Bute, you know it's so unhealthy. I do wish you'd give it up."

"Unhealthy! Stuff and nonsense—look at me!" And, indeed Bute, stopping, straightening himself, throwing out his breast, and striking it with a hard fist until it rang like a muffled drum, presented a picture of lusty, virile strength, which few men in the neighborhood of Ptolemy could have matched. "Unhealthy!" he continued; "I s'pose you'd call *Seth* healthy, with his tallow face, and breast-bone caved in. Why, the woman that marries him can use his ribs for a wash-board, when she's lost her'n. Then there was Absalom Merryfield, yo'u know, killed himself out and out, he was so keerful o' *his* health. I'd ruther have no health at all, a darned sight, than worry my life out, thinkin' on it. Not that I could'nt give up chawin' tobacco, or any thing else, if there was a good reason for it. What is it to you, Carrie, whether I chaw or not?"

Miss Dilworth very well understood Bute's meaning, but let it go without notice, as he knew she would. The truth is, she was not insensible to his many good qualities, but she was ambitious of higher game. She had not attended all the meetings held in Ptolemy, in favor of Temperance, Anti-Slavery

and Women's Rights, without imbibing as much conceit as the basis of her small mind could support. The expressions which, from frequent repetition, she had caught and retained, were put to such constant use, that she at last fancied them half original, and sighed for a more important sphere than that of a sempstress, or even a teacher. She knew she could never become a speaker—she was sure of that—but might she not be selected by some orator of Reform, as a kindred soul, to support him with her sympathy and appreciation? Thus far, however, her drooping lids had been lifted and her curls elaborately tangled, in vain. The eloquent disciples, not understanding these mute appeals, passed by on the other side.

She drew the conversation back to Mr. Woodbury, and kept it to that theme until she had ascertained all that Bute knew, or was willing to tell; for the latter had such a strong sense of propriety about matters of this kind, as might have inspired doubts of his being a native-born American. By this time they had reached the bridge over East Atauga Creek, whence it was but a short distance to the village.

"There is Friend Thurston's cottage, at last," said Miss Dilworth. "Have you seen Miss Hannah lately? But, of course, she can't visit Lakeside now."

"I'm sorry for it," Bute remarked. "She's a fine woman, in spite of her notions. But why can't she?"

"It would not be proper."

"Wouldn't it be proper for a man to visit us?"

"To be sure. How queer you talk, Bute!"

"Well—she says a woman should be allowed to do whatever a man does. If Women's Rights is worth talkin' about, it's worth carryin' out. But I guess Miss Hannah's more of a woman than she knows on. I like to hear her talk, mighty well, and she says a good many things that I can't answer, but they're ag'in nature, for all that. If she was married and had a family growin' up 'round her, she wouldn't want to be a lawyer or a preacher. Here we are, at the gate. Good-by, Miss Carrie!"

ered her neck and breast, and a worsted apron was tied to her drab gown, rather from habit than use. As she basked in the balmy warmth of the day, her wasted fingers unconsciously clasped themselves in a manner that expressed patience and trust. These were the prominent qualities of her nature—the secret of her cheerfulness and the source of her courage.

Late married, she had lost her first child, and shortly after the birth of her daughter Hannah, her husband also. The latter was a stern, silent man, rigid in creed and in discipline, but with a concealed capacity for passion which she had not understood while she possessed him. Her mind first matured in the sorrow of his loss, and she became, from that natural need which is content with no narrower comfort, a speaker in the meetings of her sect. The property she inherited at her husband's death was very small, and she was obliged to labor beyond her strength, until the bequest of an unmarried brother relieved her from pressing want. Hannah, to whom she had managed to give a tolerably thorough education, obtained a situation as teacher, for which she proved so competent that a liberal offer from the Trustees of the Young Ladies' Seminary at Ptolemy induced both mother and daughter to remove thither. Her earnings, added to the carefully husbanded property, finally became sufficient to insure them a modest support, so that, when her mother's failing health obliged Hannah to give up her place, there was no serious anxiety for the future to interfere with her filial duty.

The daughter was seated at the eastern window, beside a small table, which was covered with gorgeously tinted autumn leaves. She was occupied in arranging them in wreaths and groups, on sheets of card-board, which were designed to form an album, and to wear, as binding, the embroidery of fern-leaves, upon which we first found her engaged. Such an album, contributed by her to the Anti-Slavery Fair, the previous year, had enriched the treasury of the Society by the sum of ten dollars, and the managers had begged a second donation of the same kind.

HANNAH THURSTON:

Catching a glimpse of Miss Dilworth through the window, she rose to receive her. In stature, she was somewhat above the average height of women, though not noticeably tall, and a little too slender for beauty. Her hands were thin, but finely formed, and she carried them as if they were a conscious portion of herself, not an awkward attachment. Her face would have been a perfect oval, except that the forehead, instead of being low and softly rounded, was rather squarely enveloped in the reflective region, and the cheeks, though not pink-brown, black in shadow, and the delicate arches of the brows were drawn with a clear, even pencil, above the rest gray eyes, dark and deep under the shadow of their lashes. The nose was faultless, and the lips, although not wearing their maidenly ripeness and bloom, were so outlined, so sweetly firm in their closing junction, so their varying play of expression, that the life of her and beauty. The paleness of her face had a rare impression of impaired health: a ruddy tint would monized with the spiritual and sensitive character of calling out a beauty. In society nine men would have stood out a thought; but the tenth would have stood "Here is a woman 'to sit at a king's right storms,'" and would have carried her face in the tional part of a woman is to play an exceptional part herself, be- respect, her dignity, her virtue en. In the ot mythical, in the eyes of me rejected her ny, Hannah Thurston had sub- r, had she er was no slight triumph for her either hor- views were received with estesses of the names of her fellow pri- t, she w- ied about in utter disrespect

by Miss Dilworth's visits. She dropped her affectations in their presence, and became, for the time, a light-hearted, amiable, silly woman. She never arrived without a fresh budget of gossip, generally of slight importance, but made piquant by her rattling way of telling it.

"How thee does run on!" Friend Thurston would sometimes say, whereupon the sempstress would only toss her curls and run on all the more inveterately.

"Oh, I must tell you all about Lakeside and the new owner!" she exclaimed, as she settled herself into a chair.

Hannah Thurston could probably have told her more about Mr. Woodbury than she already knew; but it would have been unkind to cut short the eager narrative, and so Bute's report, with many additions and variations, was served out to them in chapters, during the afternoon.

hearts were violated more in appearance than in fact. Nevertheless, he felt no inclination to take part in conversation of this character, and fell into the habit of assuming a mystical, paradoxical tone, whenever he was forcibly drawn into the discussion. Sometimes, indeed, he was tempted to take the opposite side of the views advocated, simply in order to extort more reckless and vehement utterances from their defenders. It is not surprising, therefore, that his lack of earnestness,—as it seemed to the others—was attributed by many to a stolid indifference to humanity. Seth Wattles even went so far as to say: “I should not wonder if he had made his money in the accursed opium traffic.”

The two topics which, for him, possessed an intrinsically repellant character, happened to be those which were at that time most actively discussed: Spiritualism and Women's Rights. He had seen the slight-of-hand of the Indian jugglers, far more wonderful than any feats supernaturally performed in the presence of mediums, and the professed communications from the world of spirits struck him as being more inane twaddle than that which fell from the lips of the living believers. He had not lived thirty-six years without as much knowledge of woman as a single man may profitably acquire; and the better he knew the sex, the more tender and profound became his regard. To him, in his strength, however, the relation of protector was indispensable; the rudest blows of life must first fall upon his shield. The idea of an independent strength, existing side by side with his, yet without requiring its support, was unnatural and repulsive. Aunt Dennison, in her noble self-abnegation as wife and mother, was more queenly in his eyes, than Mary Wollstonecraft or Madame de Staël. It was difficult for him to believe how any truly refined and feminine woman could claim for her sex a share in the special occupations of man.

There is always a perverse fate which attracts one into the very situations he wishes to avoid. On the evening when the *Sewing-Union* met at Merryfield's, Woodbury happened to be

drawn into a group which contained Mrs. Waldo, Hannah Thurston, and the host. The latter was speaking of a plan for a Female Medical College.

"It is the first step," said he, "and its success will overthrow the dynasty of ideas, under which woman has been crushed, as it were." The phrase: "dynasty of ideas," he had borrowed from a recent lecturer.

"Well", said Mrs. Waldo, musingly, "if it went no further I should not have much to say against it, for we know that women are the best nurses, and they *may* make tolerable doctors. But I should prefer that somebody else than myself made the beginning."

"You are right," remarked Woodbury; "it is not pleasant to think of a woman standing at a dissecting-table, with a scalpel in her hand, and a quarter of a subject before her."

Hannah Thurston shuddered inwardly, but at once took up the gauntlet. "Why not?" she asked. "Are not women capable of this, and more than this, for the sake of knowledge that will enable them to do good? Or is it because their minds are too weak to grapple with the mysteries of science?"

Woodbury, to avoid a discussion to which he was so strongly averse, assumed a gay, bantering tone. "In the presence of ladies," he said, smiling, and partly directing his words to Mrs. Waldo, "there is only one way of answering the latter question."

Hannah Thurston was of too earnest a nature to endure trifling—for such seemed his reply. Her gray eyes kindled with an emotion a very little milder than contempt. "So!" she exclaimed, "we must still endure the degradation of hollow compliment. We are still children, and our noise can be quieted with sugar-plums!"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Thurston!" Woodbury gravely answered. "My apparent disrespect was but a shift to avoid discussing a subject which I have never seriously considered, and which, I will only say, seems to me a matter of instinct rather than of argument. Besides," he added, "I believe

Mrs. Waldo, as our dictatress, prohibits debate on these occasions."

The lady referred to immediately came to his assistance. "I *do* prohibit it;" said she, with a magisterial wave of the hand; "and you cannot object to my authority, Hannah, since you have a chance to defend our sex, and cover with confusion all such incorrigible bachelors as Mr. Woodbury, on Thursday next. I'm sure he's a misanthrope, or—mis—what-ever you call it."

"A misogynist?" Woodbury gayly suggested. "No, no, Mrs. Waldo. Do not you, as a clergyman's wife, know that there may be a devotional feeling so profound as to find the pale of any one sect too narrow?"

Hannah Thurston looked earnestly at the speaker. What did he mean?—was that also jest? she asked herself. She was unaccustomed to such mental self-possession. Most of the men she knew would have answered her with spirit, considering that to decline a challenge thrown down by a woman was equivalent to acknowledging the intellectual equality of the sexes—this being the assertion which they most strenuously resisted. Mr. Woodbury, however, had withdrawn as a matter of taste and courtesy. She had given him the opportunity of doing so, a little to her own discomfiture, and was conscious that her self-esteem was wounded by the result. She could not quite forgive him for this, though his manner, she felt, compelled respect. At the risk of having her silence misinterpreted, she made no reply.

Woodbury, who had not understood Mrs. Waldo's allusion, took an opportunity, later in the evening, to ask for an explanation.

"I thought you had heard," said she. "There is to be a meeting in favor of Women's Rights, on Thursday afternoon, at the Hall, in Ptolemy. Mr. Bemis, the great advocate of the reform, is to be there, and I believe they expect Bessie Stryker."

"Who is Bessie Stryker?"

"Mr. Woodbury! It's well you did not ask Hannah Thurston that question. You've been out of the country—I had forgotten that; but I should think you must have heard of her in Calcutta. She has travelled all over the country, lecturing on the subject, and has made such a name as a speaker that everybody goes to hear her. She is quite pretty, and wears the new Bloomer dress."

"Really, you excite my curiosity. I must attend this meeting, if only to show Miss Thurston that I am above the vulgar prejudice which I presume she imputes to me."

"Oh, no, Mr. Woodbury. Hannah Thurston is not unjust, whatever faults she may have. But you should know that she has a dislike—morbid, it seems to me—of the compliments which you men generally pay to us women. For my part, I see no harm in them."

"Both of you, at least, are candid," replied Woodbury, laughing, "and that trait, with me, covers a multitude of weaknesses."

Woodbury went to the meeting on the following Thursday, much as he would have attended a Brahminical festival in honor of the Goddess Unna-Purna. He felt no particular interest in the subject to be treated, except a curiosity to know how it could be rendered plausible to a semi-intelligent auditory. Of Ptolemy, privately and socially, he had seen something, but he had not yet mingled with Ptolemy in public.

"The Hall," as it was called (being the only one in the place), was a brick building, situated on the principal street. Its true name was Tumblety Hall, from the builder and owner, Mr. Jabez Tumblety, who had generously bestowed his name upon it in consideration of receiving ten per cent. on his investment, from the lease of it to phrenologists, the dancing school, Ethiopian Minstrels, exhibitors of laughing gas, lecturers on anatomy (the last lecture exclusively for gentlemen), jugglers, temperance meetings, caucuses of the Hunkers and Barnburners, and, on Sundays, to the Bethesdeans in the

for the "*shs!*" to subside, announced: "The meeting will now come to order!"

The meeting being already in order, no effect was produced by this announcement.

"As we have assembled together, as it were," he continued, "principally to listen to the noble advocates of the glorious cause who are to appear before us, my friends suggest that—that there should be no—that we should dispense, as it were, with a regular organization, and proceed to listen to their voices. The only—I would suggest, if the meeting is willing, that we should appoint—that is, that a committee should be named, as it were, to draw up resolutions expressing their—our sense on the subject of Women's Rights. Perhaps," he added, turning around, "some one will make the motion."

"I move that a committee of six be appointed!" "I second the motion!" were heard, almost simultaneously.

"Those in favor of that motion will signify their assent by saying 'Aye!'" said Mr. Merryfield.

"Aye!" rang through the house with startling unanimity, all the boys expressing their enthusiastic assent.

"Contrary—'No!'"

Dead silence.

"The Ayes have it. Who shall the Committee be composed of?"

"Both sexes must be represented. Three men and three women," said the belligerent gentleman, suddenly, half rising from his seat.

In a short time the members of the Committee were appointed, and, there being no further business on hand, Mr. Merryfield said: "I have now the pleasure, as it were, of introducing to the audience the noble advocate of Women's Rights, Isaiah Bemis, who—whose name is—is well known to you all as the champion of his—I mean, her—persecuted sex." Mr. Merryfield was so disconcerted by the half-suppressed laughter which followed this blunder, that the termination of his eulogium became still more confused. "The name of Isaiah Bemis," he

to prescribe the bounds within which Woman may labor and live. God alone has that right, and His laws govern both sexes with the same authority. Man has indeed assumed it, because he disbelieves in the intellectual equality of women. He has treated her as an older child, to whom a certain amount of freedom might be allowed, but whom it was not safe to release entirely from his guardianship. He has educated her in this belief, through all the ages that have gone by since the creation of the world. Now and then, women have arisen, it is true, to vindicate the equal authority of their sex, and have nobly won their places in history; but the growth of the truth has been slow—so slow, that to-day, in this enlightened maturity of the world, we must plead and prove all that which you should grant without our asking. It is humiliating that a woman is obliged to collect evidence to convince men of her equal intelligence. She, who is also included in the one word, Man! Placed side by side with him in Paradise—Mother of the Saviour who came to redeem his fallen race—first and holiest among the martyrs and saints! Young men! Think of your own mothers, and spare us this humiliation!"

These words, uttered with startling earnestness, produced a marked sensation in the audience. Perhaps it was a peculiarity springing from her Quaker descent, that the speaker's voice gradually assumed the character of a musical recitative, becoming a clear, tremulous chant, almost in monotone. This gave it a sad, appealing expression, which touched the emotional nature of the hearer, and clouded his judgment for the time being. After a pause, she continued in her ordinary tone:

"The pages of history do not prove the superiority of man. When we consider the position which he has for so long occupied, we should rather wonder that she has for so long resisted his authority, and won possession of the empire which he appropriated to himself. In the earliest ages he admitted her capacity to govern, a power so high and important in nature, that we should be justified in claiming that it

all other capacities, and in resting our defence on that alone. Such women as Semiramis and Zenobia, Margaret of Denmark, and Elizabeth of England, Maria Theresa, and Catharine of Russia, are not the least—not second, even—among great rulers. Jael and Judith, and the Maid of Orleans stand no less high among the deliverers of nations, than Leonidas and William Tell. The first poet who sang may have been Homer, but the second was Sappho.* Even in the schools of Philosophy, the ancients had their Hypatia, and the scholars of the Middle Ages honored the learning of Olympia Morata. Men claim the field of scientific research as being exclusively their own; but the names of Caroline Herschel in England, and Maria Mitchell in America, prove that even here women cannot justly be excluded. Ah, my friends! when God calls a human being to be the discoverer of His eternal laws, or the illustrator of His eternal beauty, He does not stop to consider the question of sex! If you grant human intellect at all to Woman, you must grant the possibility of inspiration, of genius, of a life divinely selected as the instrument of some great and glorious work. Admitting this, you may safely throw open to us all avenues to knowledge. Hampered as Woman still is—circumscribed in her spheres of action and thought (for her false education permanently distorts her habits of mind)—she is yet, at present, far above the Saxon bondmen from whom the most of you are descended. You know that she has risen thus far, not only without injury to herself, but to *your* advantage: why check her progress, here? Nay, why check it any where? If Man's dominion be thereby limited, would his head be less uneasy, if the crown he claims were shared with another? Is not a friend better than a servant? If Marriage were a *partnership* for Woman, instead of a *clerkship*, the Head of the House would feel his burthen so much the lighter. If the physician's wife were competent to prepare his medicines, or the merchant's to keep his books, or the law-

* Miss Thurston makes these statements on her own responsibility.

A STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.

The Committee of Six now made their report. Seth Ives, who was one of the number, and had assumed to himself the office of Chairman, read a string of Resolutions, settling the matter. That : Whereas, this is an Age of Progress, and no work should be overlooked in the Great Battle for the Right of the Equal Rights of Woman a cause without the support of which no other cause can be permanently successful: and Resolved, That we will in every way help forward the good work, by the Dissemination of Light and Information, tending to set forth the claims of Woman before the Community: also, Resolved, That we will circulate petitions to the State Legislature, for the investment of Woman with all civil and political rights: and, lastly, Resolved, That, we will use our best endeavors to increase the circulation of *The Monthly Hollyhock*, a journal devoted to the cause of Women's Rights.

Mr. Merryfield arose and inquired: "Shall the Report of the Committee be adopted?" He fortunately checked himself in time not to add: "as it were."

"I move its adoption!" "I second the motion!" were immediately heard from the platform.

"All who are in favor of adopting the Resolutions we have just heard read, will signify their assent by saying 'Aye!'"

A scattering, irregular fire of "Ayes" arose in reply. The boys felt that their sanction would be out of place on this occasion, with the exception of two or three, who hazarded their voices, in the belief that they would not be remarked, in the general vote. To their dismay, they launched themselves into an interval of silence, and their shrill pipes drew all eyes to their quarter of the house.

"Contrary,—'No!'"

The opponents of the movement, considering that this was not *their* meeting, refrained from voting.

"Before the meeting adjourns," said Mr. Merryfield, again rising, "I must—I take the liberty to hope, as it were, that the truths we have heard this day may spread—may sink

deeply into our hearts. We expect to be able to announce, before long, a visit from Bessie Stryker, whose failure—whom we have missed from among our eleg—eloquent champions. But we trust she is elsewhere, and our loss is their gain. I thank the audience for your attendance—attention, I should say, and approbation of our glorious reform. As there is no further business before the meeting, and our friends from Mulligansville and Atauga City have some distance to return home, we will now adjourn in time to reach their destination.”

At this hint the audience rose, and began to crowd out the narrow door-way and down the steep staircase. Woodbury, pushed and hustled along with the rest, was amused at the remarks of the crowd: “He?—oh, he’s a gassy old fellow!” “Well, there’s a good deal of truth in it!” “Bessie Stryker? I’d rather hear Hannah Thurston any day!” “He didn’t half like it!” “She has a better right to say such things than he has!”—and various other exclamations, the aggregate of which led him to infer that the audience felt no particular interest in the subject of Women’s Rights, but had a kindly personal feeling towards Hannah Thurston.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH LAKESIDE BECOMES LIVELY.

WINTER at last set in—the steady winter of Central New York, where the snow which falls at the beginning of December usually covers the ground until March. Ptolemy, at least, which lies upon the northern side of the watershed between the Susquehanna and the rivers which flow into Lake Ontario, has a much less variable winter temperature than the great valley, lying some thirty miles to the southward. Atauga Lake, in common with Cayuga and Seneca, never freezes, except across the shallows at its southern end; but its waters, so piercingly cold that they seem to cut the skin like the blade of a knife, have no power to soften the northern winds. The bottoms between Ptolemy and the lake, and also, in fact, the Eastern and Western Valleys, for some miles behind the village, are open to the North; and those sunny winter days which, in more sheltered localities, breathe away the snow, here barely succeed in softening it a little. On the hills it is even too deep for pleasure. As soon as a highway has been broken through the drifts, the heavy wood-sleds commence running, and very soon wear it into a succession of abrupt hollows, over which the light cutters go pitching like their nautical namesakes in a chopping sea.

Woodbury, in obedience to a promise exacted by his sister, went to New York for the holidays, and, as might have been anticipated, became entangled in a succession of social engagements, which detained him until the middle of January. He soon grew tired of acting as escort to his two pretty, but (it

white floor of the valley were drawn, with almost painful sharpness and distinctness, the outlines of farm-houses, and barns, fences, isolated trees, and the winding lines of elm and alder which marked the courses of the streams. Beyond the mouth of the further valley rose the long, cultivated sweep of the western hill, flecked with dull-purple patches of pine forest. Northward, across the white meadows and the fringe of trees along Roaring Brook, rose the sunny knoll of Lakeside, sheltered by the dark woods behind, while further, stretching far away between the steep shores, gleamed the hard, steel-blue sheet of the lake. The air was so intensely clear that the distance was indicated only by a difference in the hue of objects, not by their diminished distinctness.

"By Jove! this is glorious!" exclaimed Woodbury, scarcely conscious that he spoke.

"Shure, an' it's a fine place, Surr!" said the Irish driver, appropriating the exclamation.

Shortly after commencing the descent, a wreck was descried ahead. A remnant of aristocracy—or, at least, a fondness for aristocratic privilege—still lingers among our republican people, and is manifested in its most offensive form, by the drivers of heavy teams. No one ever knew a lime-wagon or a wood-sled to give an inch of the road to a lighter vehicle. In this case, a sled, on its way down, had forced an ascending cutter to turn out into a deep drift, and in attempting to regain the track both shafts of the latter had been snapped off. The sled pursued its way, regardless of the ruin, and the occupants of the cutter, a gentleman and lady, were holding a consultation over their misfortune, when Woodbury came in sight of them. As the gentleman leading his horse back into the drift to give room, turned his face towards the approaching cutter, Woodbury recognized, projecting between ear-lappets of fur, the curiously-planted nose, the insufficient lips, and the prominent teeth, which belonged to the Rev. Mr. Waldo. The recognition was mutual.

"My dear, it is Mr. Woodbury!" the latter joyfully cried,

turning to the muffled lady. She instantly stood up in the cutter, threw back her veil, and hailed the approaching deliverer: "Help me, good Samaritan! The Levite has wrecked me, and the Priest has enough to do, to take care of himself!"

Woodbury stopped his team, sprang out, and took a survey of the case. "It is not to be mended," said he; "you must crowd yourselves in with me, and we will drive on slowly, leading the horse."

"But I have to attend a funeral at Mulligansville—the child of one of our members," said Mr. Waldo, "and there is no time to lose. My dear, you must go back with Mr. Woodbury. Perhaps he can take the harness and robes. I will ride on to Van Horn's, where I can borrow a saddle."

This arrangement was soon carried into effect. Mr. Waldo mounted the bare-backed steed, and went off up the hill, thumping his heels against the animal's sides. The broken shafts were placed in the cutter, which was left "to be called for," and Mrs. Waldo took her seat beside Woodbury. She had set out to attend the funeral, as a duty enjoined by her husband's office, and was not displeased to escape without damage to her conscience.

"I'm glad you've got back, Mr. Woodbury," she said, as they descended the hill. "We like to have our friends about us, in the winter, and I assure you, you've been missed."

"It is pleasant to feel that I have already a place among you," he answered. "What is the last piece of gossip? Is the Great Sewing-Union still in existence?"

"Not quite on the old foundation. *Our* fair has been held—by the bye, there I missed you. I fully depended on selling you a quantity of articles. The Anti-Slavery Fair is over, too; but they are still working for the Jutnapore Mission, as there is a chance of sending the articles direct to Madras, before long; and so the most of us still attend, and either assist them or take our own private sewing with us."

"Where do you next meet?"

Ah, that's our principal trouble. We have ex~~hausted~~ ^{hausted} all

available houses, besides going twice to Bue's and Wilkin's. Our parsonage is so small—a mere pigeon-house—that's out of the question. I wish I had some of your empty rooms at Lakeside. Now, there's an idea! Capital! Confess that my weak feminine brain is good at resorts!"

"What is it?" Woodbury asked.

"Can't you guess? You shall entertain the Sewing-Union one evening. We will meet at Lakeside: it is just the thing!"

"Are you serious, Mrs. Waldo? I could not, of course, be so ungracious as to refuse, provided there is no impropriety in compliance. What would Ptolemy say to the plan?"

"I'll take charge of that!" she cried. "Impropriety! Are you not a steady, respectable Member of Society, I should like to know? If there's any thing set down against you, we must go to Calcutta to find it. And we are sure there are no trap-doors at Lakeside, or walled-up skeletons, or Blue Beard chambers. Besides, this isn't Mulligansville or Anacreon, and it is not necessary to be so very straight-laced. Oh yes, it is the very thing. As for the domestic preparations, count on my help, if it is needed."

"I am afraid," he replied, "that Mrs. Babb would resent any interference with her authority. In fact," he added, laughing, "I am not certain that it is safe to decide, without first consulting her."

"There, now!" rejoined Mrs. Waldo. "Do you remember what I once told you? Yes, you bachelors, who boast of your independence of woman, are the only real slaves to the sex. No wife is such a tyrant as a housekeeper. Not but what Mrs. Babb is a very honest, conscientious, proper sort of a person,—but she don't make a home, Mr. Woodbury. You should get married."

"That is easily said, Mrs. Waldo," he replied, with a laugh which hovered, like a luxuriant summer vine, the entrance to a sighing cavern,—“easily said, and might be easily done, if one were allowed to choose a wife for her domestic qualities valued at so much per month.”

"Pshaw!" said she, with assumed contempt. "You are not a natural cynic, and have no right to be single, at your age, without a good reason."

"Perhaps there *is* a good reason, Mrs. Waldo. Few persons, I imagine, remain single from choice. I have lost the susceptibility of my younger days, but not the ideal of a true wedded life. I should not dare to take the only perfect woman in the world, unless I could be lover as well as husband. I sincerely wish my chances were better: but would you have me choose one of the shallow, showy creatures I have just been visiting, or one of your strong-minded orators, here in Ptolemy?"

Mrs. Waldo understood both the earnest tone of the speaker, and the veiled bitterness of his concluding words. She read his heart at a glance, thorough woman as she was, and honored him then, and forever thenceforth.

"You must not take my nonsense for more than it is worth, Mr. Woodbury," she answered softly. "Women at my age, when God denies them children, take to match-making, in the hope of fulfilling their mission by proxy. It is unselfish in us, at least. But, bless me! here we are, at the village. Remember, the Sewing-Union meets at Lakeside."

"As soon as the Autocrat Babb has spoken," said he, as he handed her out at the Cimmerian Parsonage, "I will send word, and then the matter will rest entirely in your hands."

"Mine? Oh, I am a female General Jackson—I take the responsibility!" she cried, gayly, as the cutter drove away.

Woodbury, welcomed at the gate of Lakeside by the cheery face of Bute Wilson, determined to broach the subject at once to the housekeeper. Mrs. Fortitude Babb was glad to see him again, but no expression thereof manifested itself in her countenance and words. Wiping her bony right hand on her apron—she had been dusting the rooms, after sweeping—she took the one he offered, saying: "How's your health, Sir?" and then added: "I s'pose you've had a mighty fine time while you was away?"

"Not so fine but that I'm glad to get home again," he answered. The word "home" satisfied Mrs. Babb's sense of justice. His sister, she was sure, was not the housekeeper she herself was, and it was only right that he should see and acknowledge the fact.

"I want your advice, Mrs. Babb," Woodbury continued. "The Sewing-Union propose to meet here, one evening. They have gone the round of all the large houses in Ptolemy, and there seems to be no other place left. Since I have settled in Lakeside, I must be neighborly, you know. Could we manage to entertain them?"

"Well—comin' so suddent, like, I don't hardly know what to think. Things has been quiet here for a long time:" the housekeeper grimly remarked, with a wheezy sigh.

"That is true," said Woodbury; "and of course you must have help."

"No!" she exclaimed, with energy, "I don't want no help—leastways only Melindy. The rooms must be put to rights—not but what they're as good as Mrs. Bue's any day; and there'll be supper for a matter o' twenty; and cakes and things. When is it to be?"

"Next Friday, I presume; but can you get along without more assistance?"

"'Taint every one that would do it," replied Mrs. Babb, "There's sich a settin' to rights, afterwards. But I can't have strange help mixin' in, and things goin' wrong, and me to have the credit of it. Melindy's used to my ways, and there's not many others that knows what housekeepin' is. *Sich* a mess as *some* people makes of it!"

Secretly, Mrs. Babb was well pleased at the opportunity of publicly displaying her abilities, but it was not in her nature to do any thing out of the regular course of her housekeeping, without having it understood that she was making a great sacrifice. She was not so unreasonable as to set herself up for an independent power, but she stoutly demanded and maintained the rights of a belligerent. This point having once

been conceded, however, she exhibited a wonderful energy in making the necessary preparations.

Thanks to Mrs. Waldo, all Ptolemy soon knew of the arrangement, and, as the invitation was general, nearly everybody decided to accept it. Few persons had visited Lakeside since Mrs. Dennison's funeral, and there was some curiosity to know what changes had been made by the new owner. Besides, the sleighing was superb, and the moon nearly full. The ladies connected with the Sewing-Union were delighted with the prospect, and even Hannah Thurston, finding that her absence would be the only exception and might thus seem intentional, was constrained to accompany them. She had seen Woodbury but once since their rencontre at Merryfield's, and his presence was both unpleasant and embarrassing to her. But the Merryfields, who took a special pride in her abilities, cherished the hope that she would yet convert him to the true faith, and went to the trouble of driving to Ptolemy in order to furnish her with a conveyance.

Early in the afternoon the guests began to arrive. Bute, aided by his man Patrick, met them at the gate, and, after a hearty greeting (for he knew everybody), took the horses and cutters in charge. Woodbury, assuming the character of host according to Ptolemaic ideas, appeared at the door, with Mrs. Babb, rigid in black bombazine, three paces in his rear. The latter received the ladies with frigid courtesy, conducted them up-stairs to the best bedroom, and issued the command to each of them, in turn: "lay off your Things!" Their curiosity failed to detect any thing incomplete or unusual in the appointments of the chamber. The furniture was of the Dennison period, and Mrs. Fortitude had taken care that no fault should be found with the toilet arrangements. Miss Eliza Clancy had indeed whispered to Miss Ruhaney Goodwin: "Well, I think they might have some lavender water, for us,"—but the latter immediately responded with a warning "*sh!*" and drew from her work bag a small oiled-silk package, which she unfolded, producing therefrom

Hamilton Bue and the Hon. Zeno Harder were the first to make their appearance, not much in advance, however, of the crowd of ambitious young gentlemen. Many of the latter were personally unknown to Woodbury, but this was not the least embarrassment to them. They gave him a rapid salutation, since it was not to be avoided, and hurried in to secure advantageous positions among the ladies. Seth Wattles not only came, to enjoy a hospitality based, as he had hinted, on the "accursed opium traffic," but brought with him a stranger from Ptolemy, a Mr. Grindle, somewhat known as a lecturer on Temperance.

The rooms were soon filled and Woodbury was also obliged to throw open his library, into which the elderly gentlemen withdrew, with the exception of the Rev. Mr. Styles. Mr. Waldo relished a good story, even if the point was somewhat coarse, and the Hon. Zeno had an inexhaustible fund of such. Mr. Bue, notwithstanding he felt bound to utter an occasional mild protest, always managed to be on hand, and often, in his great innocence, suggested the very thing which he so evidently wished to avoid. If the conversation had been for some time rather serious and heavy, he would say: "Well, Mr. Harder, I am glad we shall have none of *your* wicked stories to-night"—a provocation to which the Hon. Zeno always responded by giving one.

Bute Wilson, after seeing that the horses were properly attended to, washed his hands, brushed his hair carefully, and put on his Sunday frock-coat. Miss Caroline Dilworth v one of the company, but he had been contented with an o sional glimpse of her through the window, until the arriv the fires in the grates, the b and other arrangements of the evening, gave him m su opportunity to mix with the company, and watch h b sweetheart and his presumed rival, without appeari ng "Darn that blue-gilled baboon!" he muttered to hi it believe his liver's whiter than the milt of a herrin', an out his yaller skin, he'd bleed whey 'stid o' blood."

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE EVENING.

WOODBURY had prudently left the preparations for the refreshment of his numerous guests in the hands of Mrs. Babb, who, aided by the sable Melinda, had produced an immense supply of her most admired pastry. By borrowing freezers from the confectioner in Ptolemy, and employing Patrick to do the heavy churning, she had also succeeded in furnishing very tolerable ices. The entertainment was considered to be—and, for country means, really was—sumptuous. Nevertheless, the housekeeper was profuse in her apologies, receiving the abundant praises of her guests with outward grimness and secret satisfaction.

“Try these crullers,” she would say: “p'r'aps you'll find 'em better 'n the jumbles, though I'm afeard they a'n't hardly done enough. But you'll have to put up with sich as there is.”

“Oh, Mrs. Babb!” exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton Bue, “don't say that! Nobody bakes as nice as you do. I wish you'd give me the receipt for the jumbles.”

“You're welcome to it, if you like 'em, I'm sure. But it depends on the seasonin', and I don't never know if they're goin' to come out right.”

“Mrs. Babb,” said Woodbury, coming up at this moment, “will you please get a bottle of Sherry. The gentlemen, I see, have nothing but lemonade.”

“I told Bute to git some for them as likes it.”

“A-hm!” Mrs. Bue ejaculated, as the housekeeper departed to look after the wine; “I think, Mr. Woodbury, they don't take any thing more.”

"Let me give them a chance, Mrs. Bue. Ah, here comes Bute, with the glasses. Shall I have the pleasure?" offering her one of the two which he had taken.

"Oh, dear me, no—not for any thing!" she exclaimed, looking a little frightened.

"Mr. Bue," said Woodbury, turning around to that gentleman, "as Mrs. Bue refuses to take a glass of wine with me, you must be her substitute."

"Thank you, I'd—I'd rather not, *this* evening," said Mr. Bue, growing red in the face.

There was an embarrassing pause. Woodbury, looking around, perceived that Bute had already offered his tray to the other gentlemen, and that none of the glasses upon it had been taken. He was about to replace his own without drinking, when the Hon. Zeno Harder said: "Allow me the pleasure, Sir!" and helped himself. At the same moment the Rev. Mr. Waldo, in obedience to a glance from his wife, followed his example.

"I have not tasted wine for some years," said the latter, "but I have no objection to its rational use. I have always considered it sanctioned," he added, turning to Mr. Styles, "by the Miracle of Cana."

Mr. Styles slightly nodded, but said nothing.

"Your good health, Sir!" said the Hon. Zeno, as he emptied his glass.

"*Health?*" somebody echoed, in a loud, contemptuous whisper.

Woodbury bowed and drank. As he was replacing his glass, Mr. Grindle, who had been waiting for the consummation of the iniquity, suddenly stepped forward. Mr. Grindle was a thin, brown individual, with a long, twisted nose, and a voice which acquired additional shrillness from the fact of its appearing to proceed entirely from the said nose. He had occasionally lectured in Ptolemy, and was known,—by sight, at least,—to all the company. Woodbury, however, was quite ignorant of the man and every thing concerning him.

Ptolemy. Commencing with the cheap grogeries, he gradually rose in his attacks until he reached the men of wealth and education. "There are some of these in our neighborhood," he said: "it is not necessary for me to mention names—men whom perhaps we might excuse for learning the habit of rum-drinking on foreign shores, where our blessed reform has not yet penetrated, if they did not bring it here with them, to corrupt and destroy our own citizens. Woe unto those men, say I! Better that an ocean of fire had rolled between those distant shores of delusion and debauchery and this redeemed land, so that they could not have returned! Better that they had perished under the maddening influence of the bowl that stingeth like an adder, before coming here to add fresh hecatombs to the Jaws of the Monster!" Of course, everybody in Ptolemy knew who was meant, and sympathizing friends soon carried the report to Lakeside.

The unpleasant episode was soon forgotten, or, from a natural sense of propriety, no longer commented upon. Even the strongest advocates of Temperance present felt mortified by Mr. Grindle's vulgarity. Hannah Thurston, among others, was greatly pained, yet, for the first time, admired Woodbury's coolness and self-possession, in the relief which it gave her. She wished for an opportunity to show him, by her manner, a respect which might in some degree counterbalance the recent rudeness, and such an opportunity soon occurred.

She was standing before the picture of Francesca da Rimini, lost in the contemplation of the wonderful grace and pathos of the floating figures, when Woodbury, approaching her, said:

"I am glad that you admire it, Miss Thurston. The picture is a great favorite with me."

"The subject is from Dante, is it not?" she asked; "that figure is he, I think."

Woodbury was agreeably surprised at her perception, especially as she did not say "*Dant*," which he might possibly have expected. He explained the engraving, and found that she recollected the story, having read Cary's translation.

"Since you are so fond of pictures, Miss Thurston," said he, "let me show you another favorite of mine. Here, in the library."

Taking a large portfolio from its rack, he opened it on the table, under a swinging lamp. There were views of Indian scenery—strange temples, rising amid plummy tufts of palm; elephants and tigers grappling in jungles of gigantic grass; pillared banians, with gray-bearded fakirs sitting in the shade, and long ghauts descending to the Ganges. The glimpses she caught, as he turned the leaves, took away her breath with sudden delight.

At last he found the plate he was seeking, and laid it before her. It was a tropical brake, a tangle of mimosa-trees, with their feathery fronds and balls of golden down, among which grew passion-flowers and other strange, luxuriant vines. In the midst of the cool, odorous darkness, stood a young Indian girl of wonderful beauty, with languishing, almond-shaped eyes, and some gorgeous unknown blossom drooping from her night-black hair. Her only garment, of plaited grass or rushes, was bound across the hips, leaving the lovely form bare in its unconscious purity. One hand, listless, hanging among the mimosa leaves, which gradually folded up and bent at where she touched them, seemed to seek the head of a thrust out from the foliage to meet it. At the bottom of the picture a fawn forced its way through the tangled grass. The girl, in her dusky beauty, seemed a dryad of the tufted forest—the child of summer, and perfume, and first

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Hannah Thurston, impressed by the sentiment of the picture: "It is the tube rose."

"Ah, you comprehend it!" exclaimed Woodbury and pleased: "do you know the subject?"

"Not at all, but it scarcely needs an explanation."

"Have you ever heard of Kalidasa, the Hindu poet?"

"I have not, I am sorry to say," she answered.

sometimes found references to the old Sanscrit literature in modern authors, but that is all I know about it."

"My own knowledge has been derived entirely from translations," said he, "and I confess that this picture was the cause of my acquaintance with Kalidasa. I never had patience to read their interminable epics. Shall I tell you the story of Sakontala, this lovely creature?"

"Certainly, if you will be so kind: it must be beautiful."

Woodbury then gave her a brief outline of the drama, to which she listened with the greatest eagerness and delight. At the close, he said:

"I am sorry I have not a copy of the translation to offer you. But, if you would like to read another work by the same poet, I think I have the '*Megha-Duta*,' or 'Cloud-Messenger,' somewhere in my library. It is quite as beautiful a poem, though not in the dramatic form. There are many characteristic allusions to Indian life, but none, I think, that you could not understand."

"Thank you, Mr. Woodbury. It is not often that I am able to make the acquaintance of a new author, and the pleasure is all the greater. I know very little of literature outside of the English language, and this seems like the discovery of a new world in the Past. India is so far-off and unreal."

"Not to me," he answered, with a smile. "We are creatures of habit to a greater extent than the most of us guess. If you could now be transplanted to India, in less than five years you would begin to imagine that you were born under the lotus-leaf, and that this life in Ptolemy had occurred only in the dreams of a tropical noonday."

"Oh, no, no!" said she, with earnestness. "We cannot so forget the duties imposed upon us—we cannot lose sight of our share in the great work intrusted to our hands. Right, and Justice, and Conscience, are everywhere the same!"

"Certainly, as absolute principles. But our individual duties vary with every change in our lives, and our individual action is affected, in spite of ourselves, by the influences of the exter-

end—thus—it burns with a very slow fire. This single piece would burn for nearly a whole day.”

“But what is the other magical substance?” she asked.

“Here is a specimen,” said he, taking the lid from a circular box of carved bamboo, and disclosing to their view some cigars.

The spinsters uttered a simultaneous exclamation. “Dreadful!” cried Mrs. Waldo, in affected horror. “Hannah, can you imagine such depravity?”

“I confess, it seems to me an unnatural taste,” Hannah Thurston gravely answered; “but I presume Mr. Woodbury has some defence ready.”

“Only this,” said he, with an air between jest and earnest, “that the habit is very agreeable, and, since it produces a placid, equable tone of mind, highly favorable to reflection, might almost be included in the list of moral agencies.”

“Would it not be more satisfactory,” she asked, “if you could summon up the same condition of mind, from an earnest desire to attain the Truth, without the help of narcotic drugs?”

“Perhaps so,” he replied; “but we are all weak vessels, as you know, Mrs. Waldo. I have never yet encountered such a thing as perfect harmony in the relations between body and mind. I doubt, even, if such harmony is possible, except at transient intervals. For my part, my temper is so violent and uncontrollable that the natural sedative qualities of my mind are insufficient.”

Mrs. Waldo laughed heartily at this assertion, and the serious tone in which it was uttered. Hannah Thurston, to whom every fancied violation of the laws of nature was more or less an enormity, scarcely knew whether to be shocked or amused. She had determined to carefully guard herself against committing such an indiscretion as Mr. Grindle, but it was hard to be silent, when Duty demanded that she should bear a stern testimony against evil habits.

“You should be charitable, ladies,” Woodbury continued, “towards some of our masculine habits, seeing that we do not interfere with yours.”

"Bless me! what habits have we, I should like to know!" exclaimed Mrs. Waldo.

"A multitude: I don't know the half of them. Crochet-work, and embroidery, and patterns, for instance. Tea is milder than tobacco, I grant, but your systems are more sensitive. Then, there are powders and perfumes; eau de Cologne, lavender, verbena, heliotrope, and what not—against all of which I have nothing to say, because their odors are nearly equal to that of a fine Havana cigar."

Miss Eliza Clancy and Miss Ruhaney Goodwin exchanged glances of horror. They were both too much embarrassed to reply.

"You understand our weaknesses," said Hannah Thurston, with a smile in which there was some bitterness.

"I do not call them weaknesses," he answered. "I should be glad if this feminine love of color and odor were more common among men. But there are curious differences of taste, in this respect. I have rarely experienced a more exquisite delight than in riding through the rose-fields of the season for making attar: yet some persons the smell of a rose. Musk, which is a favorite perfume many, is to me disagreeable. There is, however, a phenomenon for this habit of mine, which, perhaps you know."

"No," said she, still gravely, "I know nothing seems to me unnecessary, and—if you will pardon word—pernicious."

"Certainly. It is so, in many cases. But some possess an overplus of active nervous life, which use of a slight artificial sedative. The peculiar fascination of smoking is not in the taste of the weed, but the sign smoke. It is the ear of corn which we hold out to harness the skittish thoughts that are running loose. Orient, men accomplish the same result by a rosary, of which they run through their fingers."

"Yes!" interrupted Mrs. Waldo: "My brother

to me you was gallivantin' round that Carrline Dilwuth, more than's proper."

Bute, standing with legs spread out and back to the fire, answered, as he turned around to face it, whereby, if he blushed, the evidence was covered by the glow of the flame: "Well, she's a gay little creetur, and 'taint no harm."

"I dunno about that," sharply rejoined the housekeeper. "She's a cunnin', conceited chit, and 'll lead you by the nose. You're just fool enough to be captivated by a piece o' wax-work and curls. It makes me sick to look at 'em. Gals used to comb their hair when I was young. I don't want no sich a thing as *she* is, to dance at my buryin'."

"Oh, Mother Forty, don't you go off about it!" said Bute, deprecatingly. "I ain't married to her, nor likely to be."

"Married! I guess not! Time enough for that when I'm dead and gone. Me that brought you up, and to have somebody put over my head, and spendin' all your earnins on fine clothes, and then hankerin' after *my* money. But it's locked up, safe and tight, I can tell you that."

"I'm man-grown, I reckon," said Bute, stung into resistance by this attack, "and if I choose to git married, some day or other, I don't see who can hinder me. It's what everybody else does, and what you've done, yourself."

Bute strode off to bed, and the housekeeper, sitting down before the fire, indulged in the rare luxury of shedding several tears.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH MR. WOODBURY PAYS AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

ON the following Monday, Woodbury having occasion to visit Ptolemy, took with him the volume of Kalidasa, intending to leave it at the cottage of the widow Thurston. The day was mild and sunny, and the appearance of the plank sidewalk so inviting to the feet, that he sent Bute forward to the Ptolemy House with the cutter, on alighting at the cottage gate.

The door of the dwelling, opening to the north, was protected by a small outer vestibule, into which he stepped, designing simply to leave the book, with his compliments, and perhaps a visiting-card—though the latter was not *de rigueur* in Ptolemy. There was no bell-pull; he knocked, gently at first, and then loudly, but no one answered. Turning the knob of the door he found it open, and entered a narrow little hall, in which there was a staircase leading to the upper story, and two doors on the left. Knocking again at the first of these, an answer presently came from the further room, and the summons, "Come in!" was repeated, in a clear though weak voice.

He no longer hesitated, but advanced into the sitting-room. Friend Thurston, sunning herself in her comfortable chair, looked around. A fleeting expression of surprise passed over her face, but the next moment she stretched out her hand, saying: "How does thee do?"

"My name is Woodbury," said he, as he took it respectfully, "I——"

"I thought it must be thee," she interrupted. "Hannah described thy looks to me. Won't thee sit down?"

"I have only called to leave a book for your daughter, and will not disturb you."

"Thee won't disturb me. I feel all the better for a little talk now and then, and would be glad if thee could sit and chat awhile. Thee's just about the age my little Richard would have been if he had lived."

Thus kindly invited, Woodbury took a seat. His eye appreciated, at a glance, the plainness, the taste, and the cozy comfort of the apartment, betraying in every detail, the touches of a woman's hand. Friend Thurston's face attracted and interested him. In spite of her years, it still bore the traces of former beauty, and its settled calm of resignation recalled to his mind the expression he remembered on that of Mrs. Dennison. Her voice was unusually clear and sweet, and the deliberate evenness of her enunciation,—so different from the sharp, irregular tones of the Ptolemy ladies,—was most agreeable to his ear.

"Hannah's gone out," she resumed; "but I expect her back presently. It's kind of thee to bring the book for her. Thee bears no malice, I see, that she lectured thee a little. Thee must get used to that, if thee sees much of our people. We are called upon to bear testimony, in season and out of season, and especially towards men of influence, like thee, whose responsibilities are the greater."

"I am afraid you over-estimate my influence," Woodbury replied; "but I am glad you do not suppose that I could bear malice on account of a frank expression of opinion. Every man has his responsibilities, I am aware, but our ideas of duty sometimes differ."

"Thee's right there," said the old lady; "and perhaps we ought not to ask more than that the truth be sought for, in a sincere spirit. I don't think, from thy face, that there is much of stubborn worldly pride in thy nature, though thee belongs to the world, as we Friends say."

"I have found that a knowledge of the world cures one of unreasonable pride. The more I mingle with men, the more I find reflections of myself, which better enable me to estimate my own character."

"If thee but keeps the heart pure, the Holy Spirit may come to thee in the crowded places, even as The Saviour was caught up from the midst of His Disciples!" she exclaimed with fervor. Gazing on her steady, earnest eyes, Woodbury could not help thinking to himself: "The daughter comes legitimately by her traits."

"Can thee accustom thyself to such a quiet life as thee leads now?" she asked; and then gazing at him, continued, as if speaking to herself: "It is not a restless face. Ah, but that is not always a sign of a quiet heart. There are mysteries in man, past finding out, or only discovered when it is too late!"

"This life is not at all quiet," he answered, "compared with that which I have led for the past ten or twelve years. In a foreign country, and especially within the tropics, the novelty of the surroundings soon wears off, and one day is so exactly the repetition of another, that we almost lose our count of time. It seems to me, now, as if I were just awaking out of a long sleep. I have certainly thought more, and felt more, in these three months than in as many years abroad; for I had come to believe that the world was standing still, while now I see that it really moves, and I must move with it."

"I like to hear thee say that!" exclaimed the widow, turning suddenly towards him, with a bright, friendly interest in her face. "Men are so apt to be satisfied with their own opinions—at least, when they've reached thy age. Thee's over thirty, I should think?"

"Thirty-six," Woodbury respectfully answered, "but I hope I shall never be so old as to suppose, like the counsellors of Job, that wisdom will die with me."

The widow understood his allusion, in the literal sense which he intended: not so another auditor. Hannah Thurston, who heard the last words as she entered the room, at once

dom and weakness, of the tenderest imagination and the coarsest reality. But I have no copy, at present, by which to test the correctness of that impression. I am not a very critical reader, as you will soon discover, Miss Thurston. Do you like Carlyle?"

"I like his knowledge, his earnestness, and his clear insight into characters and events, though I cannot always adopt his conclusions. His thought, however, is strong and vital, and it refreshes and stimulates at the same time. I am afraid he spoils me for other authors."

"Is not that, in itself, an evidence of something false in his manner? That which is absolutely greatest or truest should not weaken our delight in the lower forms of excellence. Peculiarities of style, when not growing naturally out of the subject, seem to me like condiments, which disguise the natural flavor of the dish and unfit the palate to enjoy it. Have you ever put the thought, which Carlyle dresses in one of his solemn, involved, oracular sentences, into the Quaker garb of plain English?"

"No," said Hannah Thurston, somewhat startled. "I confess," she added, after a pause, "the idea of such an experiment is not agreeable to me. I cannot coldly dissect an author whom I so heartily admire."

Woodbury smiled very, very slightly, but her quick eye caught and retained his meaning. "Then I will not dissect him for you," he said; "though I think you would find a pleasure in the exercise of the critical faculty, to counterbalance the loss of an indiscriminate admiration. I speak for myself, however. I cannot be content until I ascertain the real value of a man and his works, though a hundred pleasant illusions are wrecked in the process. I am slow to acknowledge or worship greatness, since I have seen the stuff of which many idols are composed. The nearer an author seems to reflect my own views, the more suspicious I am, at first, of his influence upon me. A man who knows how to see, to think, and to judge, though he may possess but an average intellect,

do not like to be obliged to him for kindnesses, when he, no doubt, thinks my condemnation of his habits impertinent,—when, I know, he despises and sneers at my views!”

“Hannah,” said the mother, gravely, “I think thee does him injustice. He is not the man to despise thee, or any one who thinks earnestly and labors faithfully, even in a cause he cannot appreciate. We two women, living alone here, or only seeing the men who are with us in sympathy, must not be too hasty to judge. Is thee not, in this way, committing the very fault of which thee accuses him?”

“Perhaps so,” said Hannah: “I doubt whether I know what *is* true.” She sank wearily into a chair. The volume Woodbury left behind, caught her eye. Taking it up, she turned over the leaves listlessly, but soon succumbed to the temptation and read—read until the fairy pictures of the Indian moonlight grew around her, as the Cloud sailed on, over jungle and pagoda, and the dance of maidens on the marble terraces.

Meanwhile, Woodbury having transacted his business and Bute Wilson his, the two were making preparations to return to Lakeside, when a plump figure, crossing the beaten snow-track in front of the Ptolemy House, approached them. Even before the thick green veil was thrown back, Woodbury recognized the fat hand which withdrew itself from a worn chinchilla muff, as the hand of Mrs. Waldo. Presently her round dark eyes shone full upon him, and he heard—what everybody in Ptolemy liked to hear—the subdued trumpet of her voice.

“Just in time to catch you!” she laughed. “How do you do, Bute? Will you call at the parsonage, Mr. Woodbury? No? Then I must give you my message in the open street. Is anybody near? You must know it’s a secret.” After having said this in a loud tone, she lowered her voice: “Well, I don’t mind Bute knowing it: Bute is not a leaky pitcher, I’m sure.”

“I reckon Mr. Max knows that,” said Arbutus, with a broad laugh dancing in his blue eyes.

forced upon him by his friends. He possessed a comfortable property, and they were well aware of the advantage of being represented by men with bases.

His frame had been soundly developed, not over-worn, by labor in his own fields, yet he was awkward, almost shambling, in his movements. His head was usually held on the left side, and a straight line dropped from the centre of his brow would not nearly have coincided with the axis of his nose. The large, irregular mouth expressed both the honesty and the weakness of the man. His voice, always nasal, rose into a shrill, declamatory monotone when he became excited—a key which he continually let drop, and again resumed, in disagreeable fluctuations. Thus Woodbury, while heartily respecting his character, found much of his society tiresome.

His wife, Sarah, who was six or seven years younger, was one of those women, who, without the power of thinking for themselves, have, nevertheless, a singular faculty for accepting the thoughts and conclusions of others. She was entirely dependent on two or three chosen leaders in the various "Reforms," without the slightest suspicion of her mental serfdom. Every new phase of their opinions she appropriated, and reproduced as triumphantly as if it had been an original discovery. She had, in fact, no intellectual quality except a tolerable fluency of speech. This, alone, gave her some consideration in her special circle, and kept her hesitating husband in the background. Both had been touched by the Hand of Progress, rather too late for their equilibrium. They had reached the transition state, it is true, but were doomed never to pass through it, and attain that repose which is as possible to shallow as to deep waters.

In person she was thin, but not tall, with a face expressive of passive amiability, slightly relieved by dyspepsia. The pale, unhealthy color of her skin, the dulness of her eyes, and the lustreless hue of her thin, reddish-brown hair, hinted at a system hopelessly disordered by dietetic experiments. Her children had all died young, with the exception of Absalom, who

nounced the correct letter. This was written, and the process repeated until the entire communication was obtained.

"I have been teaching my sisters. They are waiting for me on the steps of the temple. Good-night, mother!"—was Absalom's message.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Seth Wattles. "The temple must mean the future life, and the steps are the successive spheres. Will any spirit communicate with me?"

The raps ceased. Mr. Dyce raised his head, looked around with his glow-worm eyes, and asked: "Does any one desire to speak with a relative or friend? Does any one feel impressed with the presence of a spirit?" His glance rested on Hannah Thurston.

"I would like to ask," said she, as the others remained silent, "whether the person whose name is in my mind, has any message for me."

After a pause, the medium shuddered, stretched out his hands upon the table, with the fingers rigidly crooked, lifted his head, and fixed his eyes on vacancy. His lips scarcely seemed to move, but a faint, feminine voice came from his throat.

"I am in a distant sphere," it said, *"engaged in the labors I began while on earth. I bear a new name, for the promise of that which I once had is fulfilled."*

Hannah Thurston said nothing. She seemed to be pondering the meaning of what she had heard. Mrs. Waldo turned to Woodbury, with a face which so distinctly said to him, without words: "It's awful!" that he answered her, in a similar way: "Don't be afraid!"

"Will you ask a question, Mr. Woodbury?" said the host.

"I have no objection," he said, in a serious tone, "to select a name, as Miss Thurston has done, and let the answer test from what spirit it comes."

After a rapid glance at the speaker, the medium pushed pencil and paper across the table, saying: "Write the name,

none of the company (except, perhaps, the medium) supposed that a trick had been intended.

"Not dead!" some one exclaimed, in great amazement. "Why did you summon him?"

"Because I did not wish to evoke any friend or relative whom I have lost, and I had a curiosity to ascertain whether the spirits of the living could be summoned, as well as those of the dead."

There was a blank silence for a few moments. Only Bute, who had stolen into the room and taken a quiet seat in one corner, with his eyes wide open, gave an audible chuckle.

Mr. Dyce, who had concealed a malignant expression under his hand, now lifted a serene face, and said, in a solemn voice: "The *living*, as we call them, cannot usurp the powers and privileges of those who have entered on the spiritual life. The spirit, whose name was written, has either left the earth, or that of another, unconsciously present in the gentleman's mind, has presented itself."

The believers brightened up. How simple was the explanation! The mere act of writing the name of one Hindoo had recalled others to Mr. Woodbury's memory, and his thoughts must have dwelt, *en passant*,—probably without his being in the least aware of it, so rapid is mental action,—on some other Hindoo friend, long since engaged in climbing the successive spheres. In vain did he protest against having received even a flying visit from the recollection of any such person. Seth Wattles triumphantly asked: "Are you always aware of every thing that passes through your mind?"

Mrs. Merryfield repeated a question she had heard the week before: "Can you always pick up the links by which you pass from one thought to another?"

Her husband modestly thrust in a suggestion: "Perhaps your friend Chuckerchurn is now among the spirits, as it were."

Mr. Dyce, who had been leaning forward, with his arms under the table, during these remarks, suddenly lifted his head,

exclaiming: "He has come back!"—which produced a momentary silence. "Yes—I cannot refuse you!" he added, as if addressing the spirit, and then started violently from his seat, twisting his left arm as if it had received a severe blow. He drew up his coat-sleeve, which was broad and loose, then the sleeve of his shirt, and displayed a sallow arm, upon the skin of which were some red marks, somewhat resembling the letters "R. R." In a few moments, however, the marks faded away.

"His initials! Who can it be?" said Seth.

"Rammohun Roy!" said Hannah Thurston, betrayed, as it almost seemed, into a temporary belief in the reality of the visitation.

"I assure you," Woodbury answered, "that nothing was further from my thoughts than the name of Rammohun Roy, a person whom I never saw. If I wished to be convinced that these phenomena proceed from spirits, I should select some one who could give me satisfactory evidence of his identity."

"The skeptical will not believe, though one came from heaven to convince them," remarked the medium, in a hollow tone.

There was an awkward silence.

"My friends, do not disturb the atmosphere!" cried Mr. Merryfield; "I hope we shall have further manifestations."

A loud rap on the table near him seemed to be intended as a reply.

Mr. Dyce's hand, after a few nervous jerks, seized the pencil, and wrote rapidly on a sheet of paper. After completing the message and appending the signature to the bottom, he heaved a deep sigh and fell back in his chair.

Mr. Merryfield eagerly grasped the paper. "Ah!" said he, "it is my friend!" and read the following:

"Be ye not weak of vision to perceive the coming triumph of Truth. Even though she creep like a tortoise in the race, while Error leaps like a hare, yet shall she first reach the goal."

The light from the spirit-world is only beginning to dawn upon the night of Earth. When the sun shall rise, only the owls and bats among men will be blind to its rays. Then the perfect day of Liberty shall fill the sky, and even the spheres of spirits be gladdened by reflections from the realm of mortals!

“BENJAMIN LUNDY.”

In spite of certain inaccuracies in the spelling of this message, the reader's face brightened with satisfaction. “There!” he exclaimed—“there is a genuine test! No one but the spirit of Lundy, as it were, could have written those words.”

“Why not?” asked Woodbury.

“Why—why—the foot of Hercules sticks out!” said Mr. Merryfield, falling, in his confusion, from the lofty strain. “You never knowed the sainted Lundy, the purest and most beautiful spirit of this age. Those are his very—yes, he would make the same expressions, as it were, if his voice could,—if he were still in the flesh.”

Woodbury's eyes, mechanically, wandered to Mrs. Waldo and Hannah Thurston. The former preserved a grave face, but a smile, perceptible to him alone, lurked at the bottom of her eyes. The latter, too earnest in all things to disguise the expression of her most fleeting emotions, looked annoyed and uneasy. Woodbury determined to take no further part in the proceedings—a mental conclusion which Mr. Dyce was sufficiently clairvoyant to feel, and which relieved while it disconcerted him.

Various other spirits announced their presence, but their communications became somewhat incoherent, and the semi-believers present were not strengthened by the evening's experiments. Mr. Waldo, in answer to a mental question, received the following message:

“I will not say that my mind dwelt too strongly on the symbols by which Faith is expressed, for through symbols the Truth was made clear to me. There are many paths, but they all have the same ending.”

Absence," the untuned keys making the melody still more dismal.

It was enough to set one's teeth on edge, but Mrs. Merryfield burst into tears. "Oh!" she cried, "it's Angelina herself! She was taking lessons, and had just got that far when she died."

The sounds ceased, and light was restored to the room. Mr. Dyce was leaning on the table, with his face in his hands. As he lifted his head, a large dark stain appeared under his right eye.

"Why, what has happened to you?" cried Merryfield. "Your eye is quite black!"

The medium, whose glance happened to fall upon his right hand, closed it so suddenly that the gesture would have attracted notice, if he had not skilfully merged it into one of his convulsive shudders. A rapid flush came to his face, and passed away, leaving it yellower than before.

"The unfriendly spirits are unusually active to-night," he finally answered: "They are perhaps encouraged by the presence of doubters or scoffers. I name no names. I received several severe blows while the light was removed, and feel exhausted by the struggles I have undergone. But it is nothing. The spirit of Paracelsus will visit me to-night, and remove the traces of this attack. Had the atmosphere been pure, it could not have occurred. But some who are here present are yet incapable of receiving the Truth, and their presence clouds the divine light through which the highest manifestations are made."

Woodbury was too much disgusted to answer. His eye fell upon Bute, who sat in the corner, with his large hand covering his mouth, and his face scarlet.

"I confess," said Mr. Waldo, turning to the medium, "that I am not convinced of the spiritual character of these phenomena. I do not profess to explain them, but neither can I explain much that I see in Nature, daily; and I do not perceive the necessity of referring them at once to supernatural causes."

was unable to recall any phrase that applied to the case, but wiped her eyes for the third time since the mysterious performance on the piano.

Mrs. Waldo, however, looked at her husband with a smile which said to him: "I knew you could silence them whenever you choose to show your strength." Then, rising, she added, aloud: "Now the atmosphere is certainly disturbed. Let us come back to our present existence, which, after all, is very good, when one has health, friends, and a contented spirit."

Mr. Merryfield whispered to his wife, who disappeared in the kitchen. "Don't go yet," he said to his guests, who had risen from the table; "we must warm you, before you start."

"Is it possible? whiskey-punch?" asked Woodbury, aside, of Mrs. Waldo.

"Hush! The very suggestion of such a thing would ruin you, if it were known," she replied.

At the end of a few minutes, Mrs. Merryfield reappeared, followed by a negro girl, who bore several steaming plates on a japanned tray. They proved to contain slices of mince-pie, *réchauffée*, and rather palatable, although heavy, in the absence of brandy. Mrs. Merryfield, during the day, had seriously thought of entertaining her guests with coffee; but as she was thoroughly convinced of the deleterious nature of the beverage, she decided that it would be no less criminal to furnish it to others than if she drank it herself. Consequently they received, instead, glasses of hot lemonade, which, by an association of ideas, almost convinced Woodbury, in spite of himself, that he was suffering under an attack of influenza.

Mr. Dyce, who adroitly managed to keep the left side of his face towards the candle, ate his portion with great relish. His spiritual office being ended for the day, he returned with avidity to the things of this world, and entered into a defence of animal food, addressed to Seth Wattles, who was inclined to be a Vegetarian. Indeed, the medium dropped hints unfavorable to the Temperance reform, which would have shocked

a black eye, ha! ha! I couldn't git a sight of his hand, though; he shet his fist and kep' it under the table."

Woodbury at first laughed heartily, but his amusement soon gave place to indignation at the swindle. "Why did you not expose the fellow?" he asked Bute.

"Oh, what's the use! Them that believes wouldn't believe any the less, if they'd seen him play the pyanna with their own eyes. I've no notion o' runnin' my head into a hornet's nest, and gittin' well stung, and no honey to show for my pains."

With which sage observation Bute drove up to the door of Lakeside.

failed to arrive. Seth Wattles presently followed, apparently by accident, but really by design. He had ascertained where Hannah intended to pass the evening, from the widow Thurston's little servant-maid, whom he waylaid as she was coming out of the grocery-store, and did not scruple to thrust himself upon the company. His self-complacency was a little disturbed by the sight of Woodbury, whose discomfiture, during the evening, he mentally resolved to accomplish.

His victim, however, was in an unusually cheerful mood, and every arrow which the indignant Seth shot, though feathered to the barb with insinuation, flew wide of the mark. Woodbury joined in denunciation of the opium traffic; he trampled on the vices of pride, hypocrisy, and selfishness; he abhorred intemperance, hated oppression, and glorified liberty. But he continually brought the conversation back to its key-note of playful humor, cordially seconded by Mrs. Waldo, whose only fault, in the eyes of her reforming friends, was that she had no taste for serious discussion. Seth, finally, having exhausted his quiver, began to declaim against the corrupting influence of cities.

"It is time that hackneyed superstition were given up," said Woodbury. "Everybody repeats, after poor old Cowper, 'God made the country and man made the town;' therefore, one is divine, and the other—the opposite. As if God had no part in that human brain and those human affections, out of which spring Art, and Discovery, and the varied fabric of Society! As if man had no part in making Nature attractive and enjoyable to us!"

"Cities are created by the selfishness of man," cried Seth, a little pompously.

"And farms, I suppose, are created entirely by benevolence!" retorted Woodbury, laughing. "You Reformers have the least cause to complain of cities. You got your Temperance from Baltimore, and your Abolition from Boston."

"That proves nothing: there was one just man even in

boughs, with which I decorated the walls, constructing a large green word—WELCOME—above the fireplace. I borrowed twelve empty bottles in which I placed as many tallow candles, and disposed them about the room, on extemporized brackets. For my own chamber, which was designed to answer as a dressing-room for the ladies, I made candlesticks out of the largest turnips I could find in the market. In fact, I purposely removed some little conveniences I possessed, and invented substitutes of the most grotesque kind. I became so much interested in my preparations, and in speculating upon the effect they would produce, that I finally grew as impatient as my guests for the evening to arrive.

“Nine o'clock was the hour appointed, and, punctually to the minute, five carriages turned out of the Bowery and drew up, one after another, at the side-door. I was at the entrance, in complete evening dress, with white gloves (washed), to receive my guests. I held a tray, upon which there were as many candles fixed in large turnips, as there were gentlemen in the party, and begged each one to take a light and follow me. The ladies, magnificently dressed in silks and laces, rustled up the narrow staircase, too much amazed to speak. As I threw open the door of my saloon, the fiddler, perched near the ceiling, struck up ‘Hail to the Chief.’ The effect, I assure you, was imposing. Miss Remington shook hands with me, heartily, exclaiming: ‘Admirable! You could not have done better.’ To be sure, there were some exclamations of surprise, and perhaps one or two blank faces—but only for a moment. The fun was seen immediately, and the evening commenced with that delightful social *abandon* in which other evenings generally end. The fiddler played a Scotch reel, and the couples took their places on the floor. Two of the older gentlemen were familiar with both the Scotch and Irish dances, and the younger ladies set about learning them with a spirit which charmed the old musician’s heart. The superb silks floated about the room to the jolliest tunes, or rested, in the intervals, on the grocer’s kegs, and once a string of pearls

broke and rolled into the fireplace. After a while, the grocer's boy, in his shirt-sleeves, made his appearance with a large market-basket on his arm, containing a mixture of cakes, raisins, and almonds. He was in great demand, especially as I furnished no plates. It was then agreed to put the basket on a keg, as a permanent refreshment-table, and the boy brought in lemonade, in all kinds of drinking-vessels. I had taken some pains to have them all of different patterns. There were tin-cups, stoneware mugs, tea-cups, bowls, and even a cologne bottle. By this time all had fully entered into the spirit of the affair: I was not only at ease but jubilant. The old fiddler played incessantly. Miss Remington sang 'The Exile of Erin' to his accompaniment, and the old man cried: we had speeches, toasts, recitations: we revived old games: we told fortunes with cards (borrowed from the porter-house across the way): in short, there was no bound to the extent of our merriment, and no break in its flow.

"It occurred to some one, at last, to look at his watch.—'God bless me! it's three o'clock!' he cried. Three!—and six hours had already passed away! The ladies tore up my green word 'WELCOME,' to get sprigs of cedar as souvenirs of the evening: some even carried off the turnip-candlesticks. Miss Remington laughed in her sleeve at the latter. 'I know better than to do that,' she said to me; 'turnips have a habit of rotting.' It was unanimously voted that I had given them the best entertainment of the season; and I am sure, for my own part, that none had been so heartily enjoyed.

"The story, as you may suppose, soon became known; and it was only by sheer resolution that I escaped a social popularity which might have turned my head at that age. I was even asked to repeat the entertainment, so that others might have a chance to participate in it; but I knew that its whole success lay in the spontaneous inspiration which prompted, and the surprise which accompanied it. The incident, however, proved to be one of the influences to which I must attribute my subsequent good fortune."

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"What?" asked Mr. Waldo.
"I heard, in some way or other,
entertainment. Knowing my

fallen into reckless habits, he called me in
and very seriously asked for an explanation
precisely
I related the circumstances, but my story
in that day forward took an increased interest
I must attribute, in part, my rapid advance
there is any moral in all this, I think you can
If there is not, perhaps you have been di-
so pardon me for talking so much about myself
my, it's delightful! I never heard any thing
Mrs. Waldo.

"shows, though," interposed Mrs. Merryfield, "he
consistent those fashionable women are. They can be
ous and independent so far for the sake of pleasure, but out they
trified at venturing so far for the sake of principle."
"You are hardly just," said Hannah Thurston, "address
the last speaker; "Mr. Woodbury's story has a moral, an
am very glad he has given it to us."

Seth Wattles had been interested and amused,
endeavoring to find some point at which he might
a show of reason, when Miss Carrie Dilworth entered the room,
and presently Bute Wilson, who had driven from Lakeside to
take Woodbury home.

"Mr. Max!" cried the latter, whose face had a flushed,
strange expression, "Diamond won't stand alone, and I must
go out and hold him till you're ready."
"I'll come at once, then," said Woodbury, and took leave
of the company.

CHAPTER XL

CONTAINING TWO DECLARATIONS, AND THE ANSWERS THERETO

As Bute, on entering the village, passed the Widow Thurton's cottage, he noticed a dim little figure emerging from the gate. Although the night was dark, and the figure was so muffled as to present no distinct outline, Bute's eyes were particularly sharp. Like the sculptor, he saw the statue in the shapeless block. Whether it was owing to a short jerking swing in the gait, or an occasional sideward toss of what seemed to be the head, he probably did not reflect; but he immediately drew the rein on Diamond, and called out "Miss Carrie!"

"Ah!" proceeded from the figure, as it stopped, with a start; "who is it?"

Bute cautiously drove near the plank sidewalk, before answering. Then he said: "It's me."

"Oh, Bute," exclaimed Miss Dilworth, "how you frightened me! Where did you come from?"

"From home. I'm a-goin' to fetch Mr. Max., but there's no hurry. I say, Miss Carrie, wouldn't you like to take a little sleigh-ride? Where are you goin' to?"

"To Waldo's."

"Why, so am I! Jump in, and I'll take you along."

Miss Dilworth, nothing loath, stepped from the edge of the sidewalk into the cutter, and took her seat. Bute experienced a singular feeling of comfort, at having the soft little body wedged so closely beside him, with the same wolf-skin spread over their mutual knees. His heart being on the side next

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her, it presently sent a tingling warmth over his whole frame; the sense of her presence impressed him with a vague physical delight, and he regretted that the cutter was not so narrow as to oblige him to take her upon his knees. It was less than half a mile to the parsonage—about two minutes, as Diamond trotted—and then the doors of heaven would close upon him.

"No! by Jimminy!" he suddenly exclaimed, turning around in the track, at the imminent risk of upsetting the cutter.

"What's the matter?" cried Miss Dilworth, a little alarmed at this unexpected manœuvre.

"It isn't half a drive for you, Carrie," Bute replied. "The leddin's prime, and I'll jist take a circuit up the creek, and cross into the South Road. We'll go it in half an hour, and there's plenty of time."

Miss Dilworth knew, better even than if he had tried to tell her, that Bute was proud and happy at having her beside him; and, moreover, where was the harm? She would have objected, on a pinch, to be driven through Ptolemy rbutus Wilson, in broad daylight; and now it was too for either of them to be recognized. So he quietly tted to what was, after all, not a hard fate.

They sped along merrily over the bottom of East Creek, past the lonely, whispering elms, and the ghostly alders fringing the stream, where the air their faces with a damp cold, the young lady shuddered a little more closely against Bute, as if she pressed a little more closely against Bute, as if t like to be alone, here, at this hour.

She had played with him, and he had no longer ite felt that the suspense of his heart was no longer be played with, long enough. He would ask a tion and demand a serious answer. His resolution et, now that the moment had come, was as tongue come paralyzed. The

genial spirits, or not, but I want you, Carrie, for my wife. You may hunt far and wide, but you'll find nobody that'll kee for you as I will. Perhaps I don't talk quite as fine as some, but talkin's like the froth on the creek; maybe it's shallow, and maybe it's deep, you can't tell. The heart's the main thing, and, thank God, I'm right there. - Carrie, this once, jist this once, don't trifle with me."

Bute's voice became soft and pleading, as he closed. Miss Dilworth was moved at last; he had struck through her affected sentimentalism, and touched the small bit of true womanly nature beneath it. But the impression was too sudden. She had not relinquished her ambitious yearnings; she knew and valued Bute's fidelity, and, precisely for that reason, she felt secure in seeming to decline it. She would have it in reserve, in any case, and meanwhile, he was too cheerful and light-hearted to suffer much pain from the delay. Had he taken her in his arms, had he stormed her with endearing words, had he uttered even one sentence of the hackneyed sentiment in which she delighted, it would have been impossible to resist. But he sat silently waiting for her answer, while the horse slowly climbed the hill over which they must pass to reach the South Road; and in that silence her vanity regained its strength.

"Carrie?" he said, at last.

"Bute?"

"You don't answer me."

"Oh, Bute!" said she, with a curious mixture of tenderness and coquetry, "I don't know how. I never thought you were more than half in earnest. And I'm not sure, after all, that we were meant for each other. I like you as well as I like anybody, but—"

Here she paused.

"But you won't have me, I s'pose?" said Bute, in a tone that was both bitter and sad.

"I don't quite mean that," she answered. "But a woman *has so much* at stake, you know. She must love more than a

man, I've been told, before she can give up her name and her life to him. I don't know, Bute, whether I should do right to promise myself to you. I've never thought of it seriously. Besides, you come upon me so sudden—you frightened me a little, and I really don't exactly know what my own mind is."

"Yes, I see," said Bute, in a stern voice.

They had reached the top of the hill, and the long descent to Ptolemy lay before them. Bute drew the reins and held the horse to his best speed. Some inner prop of his strong breast seemed to give way all at once. He took the thick end of his woollen scarf between his teeth and stifled the convulsive movements of his throat. Then a sensation of heat rushed through his brain, and the tears began to roll rapidly down his cheeks. He was grateful for the darkness which hid his face, for the bells which drowned his labored breathing, and for the descent which shortened the rest of the drive. He said nothing more, and Miss Dilworth, in spite of herself, was awed by his silence. By the time they had reached the parsonage he was tolerably calm, and the traces of his passion had disappeared from his face.

Miss Dilworth lingered while he was fastening the horse. She felt, it must be confessed, very uneasy, and not guiltless of what had happened. She knew not how to interpret Bute's sudden silence. It was probably anger, she thought, and she would therefore lay the first stone of a temple of reconciliation. She liked him too well to lose him wholly.

"Good-night, Bute!" she said, holding out her hand: "you are not angry with me, are you?"

"No," was his only answer, as he took her hand. There was no eager, tender pressure, as before, and the tone of his voice, to her ear, betrayed indifference, which was worse than anger.

After Woodbury had taken leave, there was a general movement of departure. The sempstress had come to spend a few days with Mrs. Waldo, and did not intend returning; it was rather late, and the Merryfields took the nearest road home, so

that Hannah Thurston must have walked back, alone, to her mother's cottage, had not Seth Wattles been there to escort her. Seth foresaw this duty, and inwardly rejoiced thereat. The absence of Woodbury restored his equanimity of temper, and he was as amiably disposed as was possible to his incoherent nature. He was not keen enough to perceive the strong relief into which his shapeless mind was thrown by the symmetry and balance of the man whom he hated—that he lost ground, even in his own circle, not merely from the discomfiture of the moment, but far more from that unconscious comparison of the two which arose from permanent impressions. He was not aware of the powerful magnetism which social culture exercises, especially upon minds fitted, by their honest yearning after something better, to receive it themselves.

Seth was therefore, without reason, satisfied with himself as he left the house. He had dared, at least, to face this self-constituted lion, and had found the animal more disposed to gambol than to bite. He flattered himself that his earnestness contrasted favorably with the levity whereby Woodbury had parried questions so important to the human race. Drawing a long breath, as of great relief, he exclaimed :

"Life is real, life is earnest! We feel it, under this sky: here the frivolous chatter of Society is hushed."

Hannah Thurston took his proffered arm, conscious, as she did so, of a shudder of something very like repugnance. For the first time it struck her that she would rather hear the sparkling nothings of gay conversation than Seth's serious platitudes. She did not particularly desire his society, just now, and attempted to hasten her pace, under the pretext that the night was cold.

Seth, however, hung back. "We do not enjoy the night as we ought," said he. "It elevates and expands the soul. It is the time for kindred souls to hold communion."

"Scarcely out of doors, in winter, unless they are disembodied," remarked Miss Thurston.

Seth was somewhat taken aback. He had not expected

light a tone from so grave and earnest a nature. It was unusual with her, and reminded him, unpleasantly, of Woodbury's frivolity. But he summoned new courage, and continued:

"We can say things at night for which we have no courage in daylight. We are more sincere, somehow—less selfish, you know, and more affectionate."

"There ought to be no such difference," said she, mechanically, and again hastening her steps.

"I know there oughtn't. And I didn't mean that *I* wasn't as true as ever; but—but there are chosen times when our souls are uplifted and approach each other. This is such a time, Hannah. We seem to be nearer, and—and—"

He could get no farther. The other word in his mind was too bold to be used at the outset. Besides, having taken one step, he must allow her to take the next: it would make the crisis easier for both. But she only drew her cloak more closely around her, and said nothing.

"The influences of night and—other things," he resumed, "render us insensible to time and—temperature. There is one thing, at least, which defies the elements. Is there not?"

"What is it?" she asked.

"Can't you guess?"

"Benevolence, no doubt, or a duty so stern and sacred that life itself is subordinate to its performance."

"Yes, that's true—but I mean something else!" Seth exclaimed. "Something *I* feel, now, deep in my buzzum. Shall I unveil it to your gaze?"

"I have no right to ask or accept your confidence," she replied.

"Yes, you have. One kindred soul has the right to demand every thing of the other. I might have told you, long ago, but I waited so that you might find it out for yourself, without the necessity of words. Surely you must have seen it in my eyes, and heard it in my voice, because every thing powerful in us expresses itself somehow in spite of us. The deepest

cal. You have taken it for granted that I returned, in equal measure, the feelings you have expressed towards me. Where the fortune of a life is concerned, it is best to be frank, though frankness give pain. Seth, I do not, I never can, give you love. A coincidence of opinions, of hopes and aspirations, is not love. I believe that you have made this mistake in your own mind, and that you will, sooner or later, thank me for having revealed it to you. I have never suspected, in you, the existence of love in its holiest and profoundest meaning, nor have I given you reason to suppose that my sentiments towards you were other than those of friendly sympathy and good-will. I deeply regret it, if you have imagined otherwise. I cannot atone to you for the ruin of whatever hopes you may have cherished, but I can at least save you from disappointment in the future. I tell you now, therefore, once and forever, that, whatever may happen, however our fates may change, you and I can never, never be husband and wife."

Sweet and low as was her voice, an inexorable fate spoke in it. Seth felt, word by word, its fatal significance, as the condemned culprit feels the terrible phrases of his final sentence. He knew, instinctively, that it was vain to plead or expostulate. He must, perforce, accept his doom; but, in doing so, his injured self-esteem made a violent protest. It was the fretful anger of disappointment, rather than the unselfish sorrow of love. He could only account for the fact of his refusal by the supposition that her affections were elsewhere bestowed.

"I see how it is," said he, petulantly; "somebody else is in the way."

"Do not misunderstand me," she answered. "I, only, am responsible for your disappointment. You have no right to question me, and I might well allow your insinuation to pass without notice; but my silence may possibly mislead you, as it seems my ordinary friendly regard has done. I will, therefore, for my own sake no less than yours—for I desire, in so solemn a matter, to leave no ground for self-reproach—voluntarily say to you, that I know no man to whom I could surren-

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my life in the unquestioning sacrifice of love. I have renounced the idea of marriage. My habits—the duties I have assumed—my lack of youth and perhaps” (and here the measured sweetness of her interrupted for a moment), “will never attract to me. I am unselfish enough to be just to my sex, equally pure in aspirations, equally tender in his affections, and with the richness of his experience, whom my heart would even dare still longer to cherish a hopeless dream. I have even enough of an ideal love remaining, to justify my jealousy. In my association with you for the advancement of mutual aims, as well as in our social intercourse, I have been true to you with the kindly respect which was your due as a being, but I can never recognize in you that holy love of the heart, without which Love is a mockery and more worse than death!”

Seth felt it impossible to reply, although his self-cruelly wounded. She thought herself too good for that was it! Why, the very man she had described as her ideal husband she would never meet—it was exact. It was of no use, however, for him to say so. She had made him with a solemn decision, from which there was no appeal. He must, also, needs believe her other declaration, she loved no one else. Her inordinate mental pride was the true explanation.

They had stopped, during the foregoing conversation, and Hannah Thurston had dropped her hold on his arm, and was facing him, on the narrow sidewalk. The night was so dark that neither could distinctly see the other's face. A chilly wind hummed in the leafless twigs of the trees, and they went off to sough among a neighboring grove of pines. Finding that Seth made no answer, Miss Thurston slowly resumed her homeward walk. He mechanically accompanied her. As they approached the widow's door, she heaved a long, hoarse sigh, and muttered :
“Well, there's another aspiration deceived.

fessed to herself that Seth's declaration of love was in itself her greatest humiliation. She had not told him the whole truth, though it had seemed to be so, when she spoke. She had *not* renounced the dream of her younger years. True, she had forcibly stifled it, trodden upon it with the feet of a stern resolution, hidden its ruins from sight in the remotest chamber of her heart—but now it arose again, strong in its immortal life. Oh, to think *who* should have wooed her under the stars, in far other words and with far other answers—the man whom every pulse of her being claimed and called upon, the man who never came ! In his stead this creature, whose love seemed to leave a stain behind it—whose approach to her soul was that of an unclean footstep. Had it come to this ? Was *he* the only man whom the withheld treasures of her heart attracted towards her ? Did he, alone, suspect the splendor of passion which shone beneath the calmness and reserve of the presence she showed to the world ?

It was a most bitter, most humiliating thought. With her head drooping wearily towards her breast, and her hands clasped in her lap, with unheeded tears streaming from her eyes, she sought refuge from this pain in that other pain of the imagined love that once seemed so near and lovely—lovelier now, as she saw it through the mist of a gathering despair. Thus she sat, once more the helpless captive of her dreams, while the lamp burned low and the room grew cold.

CHAPTER XII.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

THE morning came, late and dark, with a dreary March rain, the commencement of that revolutionary anarchy in the weather, through which the despotism of Winter is overthrown, and the sweet republic of Spring established on the Earth. Even Woodbury, as he looked out on the writhing trees, the dripping roofs, and the fields of soggy, soaked snow, could not suppress a sigh of loneliness and yearning. Bute, whose disappointment, bitter though it was, failed to counteract the lulling warmth of the blankets after his ride home against the wind, and who had therefore slept soundly all night, awoke to a sense of hollowness and wretchedness which he had never experienced before. His duties about the barn attended to, and breakfast over, he returned to his bedroom to make his usual Sunday toilet. Mr. Woodbury had decided not to go to church, and Bute, therefore, had nothing but his own thoughts, or the newspapers, to entertain him through the day. Having washed his neck and breast, put on the clean shirt which Mrs. Babb took care to have ready for him, and combed his yellow locks, he took a good look at himself in the little mirror.

"I a'n't handsome, that's a fact," he thought to himself, "but nuther is she, for that matter. I've got good healthy blood in me, though, and if my face *is* sunburnt, it don't look like taller. I don't see why all the slab-sided, lantern-jawed, holler-breasted fellows should have no trouble o' gittin' wives, and me, of a darned sight better breed, though I do say it, to

have sich bad luck ! I can't stand it. I've got every thing here that a man could want, but 'ta'n't enough. O Lord ! to think her children should have somebody else than me for a father !”

Bute groaned and threw himself on the bed, where he thrust both hands through his carefully combed hair. His strong masculine nature felt itself wronged, and the struggle was none the less severe, because it included no finer spiritual disappointment. He possessed only a true, honest, tender heart, as the guide to his instincts, and these, when baffled, suggested no revenge, such as might occur to a more reckless or more imaginative nature. His life had been blameless, heretofore, from the simple force of habit, and the pure atmosphere in which he lived. To confess the truth, he was not particularly shocked by the grosser experiences of some of his friends, but to adopt them himself involved a change so violent that he knew not where it might carry him. If the thought crossed his mind at all, it was dismissed without a moment's hospitality. He did not see, because he did not seek, any escape from the sore, weary, thirsty sensation which his disappointment left behind. The fibres of his nature, which were accustomed to give out a sharp, ringing, lusty twang to every touch of Life, were now muffled and deadened in tone : that was all.

It might have been some consolation to Bute, if he could have known that his presumed rival was equally unfortunate. In the case of the latter, however, there was less of the pang of blighted hopes than of the spiteful bitterness of wounded vanity. Seth Wattles was accustomed to look upon himself, and not without grounds of self-justification, as an unusual man. The son of a poor laborer, orphaned at an early age, and taken in charge by a tailor of Ptolemy, who brought him up to his own business, he owed his education mostly to quick ear and a ready tongue. His brain, though shallow, was active, its propelling power being his personal conceit ; it he was destitute of imagination, and hence his

flights of eloquence were often hopelessly confused and illogical. The pioneer orators of Abolition and Temperance, who visited Ptolemy, found in him a willing convert, and he was quick enough to see and to secure the social consideration which he had gained in the small community of "Reformers"—an advantage which the conservative society of the village denied to him. Indeed, the abuse to which he was occasionally subjected, was in itself flattering; for only men of importance, he thought, are thus persecuted. Among his associates, it was customary to judge men by no other standard than their views on the chosen reforms, and he, of course, stood among the highest. His cant, his presumption, his want of delicacy, were all overlooked, out of regard to an advocacy of "high moral truths," which was considered to be, and doubtless was, sincere.

Let us not, therefore, judge the disappointed tailor too harshly. His weaknesses, indeed, were a part of his mental constitution, and could, under no circumstances, have been wholly cured; but it was his own fault that they had so thoroughly usurped his nature.

Whatever spiritual disturbance he might have experienced, on awaking next morning to the realities of the world, the woman who rejected him was much more deeply and painfully troubled. Years had passed since her heart had known so profound an agitation. She felt that the repose which she had only won after many struggles, had deceived herself. It was a false calm. The smooth mirror, wherein the sunshine and the stars saw themselves by turns, was only smooth so long as the south-wind failed to blow. One warm breath, coming over the hills from some far-off, unknown region, broke into fragments the steady images of her life. With a strange conflict of feeling, in which there was some joy and much humiliation, she said to herself: "I am not yet the mistress of my fate."

She rose late, unrefreshed by her short, broken sleep, and uncheered by the dark, cold, and wet picture of the valley. It was one of those days when only a heart filled to the brim

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ppiness can take delight in life—when the
s present themselves as wear-ary tasks—when
uch is out of tune, and every work at-
ord the more. Descending g to the sitting-
her mother in the rocking-chair, before a
he little servant-girl was busy, preparing
fast—a work which Hannah h herself usually

ate, Hannah," said the widow. "I thought
ed, and might as well sleep, while Jane set
st learn it some time, thee knows."
thee, mother," the daughter ter replied. "I
l, and have a little headache he this morning.
I think."

tions it, I see that thee's quite pale. Jane
of tea in the pot; or, stay, ay, thee'd bette
et me make it."

lded to the dietetic ideas of her friends, s
he use of tea and coffee—a a step in whic
t able to follow her. A few w months before
have declined the proposal sal to break he
ven on the plea of indispositio tion; she woul
natural craving for a stimulant or a sec
g morbid; but now she was too listless
ch minor questions, to refuse. use. The unac
ge warmed and cheered her, r, and she ros
ngthened to resume her usual eal manner.
ould do thee good," said the widow, notin
as it was, with the quick eye of a mothe
nah, thee carries thy notions about diet

s right, mother," was the answer. She h
commence a new discussion of one of the f
the two could not agree. he day, pre
e had been put in order for the rvant-girl
the frugal dinner, and the serv

spatched to the Cimmerian Church, Hannah took her usual seat by the window, saying: "Shall I read to thee, mother?"

"If thee pleases."

There was no Quaker Meeting nearer than Tiberius, and hence it had been the widow's custom, on "First-Days," to read, or hear her daughter read, from the classics of the sect. To Hannah, also, in spite of her partial emancipation, there was a great charm in the sweet simplicity and sincerity of the early Friends, and she read the writings of Fox, Barclay, Elwood, and William Penn, with a sense of refreshment and peace. To these were added some other works of a similar character, which the more cultivated Quakers have indorsed as being inspired by the true spirit—Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, Madame Guyon, and Pascal. She now took the oft-read "No Cross, No Crown," of William Penn, the tone of which was always consoling to her; but this time its sweet, serious utterances seemed to have lost their effect. She gave the words in her pure, distinct voice, and strove to take them into her mind and make them her own: in vain! something interposed itself between her and the familiar meaning, and made the task mechanical. The widow felt, by a sympathetic presentiment, rather than from any external evidence which she could detect, that her daughter's mind was in some way disturbed; yet that respectful reserve which was habitual in this, as in most Quaker families, prevented her from prying into the nature of the trouble. If it was a serious concern, she thought to herself, Hannah would mention it voluntarily. There are spiritual anxieties and struggles, she knew, which must be solved in solitude. No one, not even a mother, should knock at the door of that chamber where the heart keeps its privacies, but patiently and silently wait until bidden to approach and enter.

Nevertheless, after dinner, when the household order was again restored, and Hannah, looking from the window upon the drenched landscape, unconsciously breathed a long, weary sigh, Friend Thurston felt moved to speak.

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aid, gravely and softly,
thy mind to-day."

The daughter made no reply.

She looked upon her mother
calm in the cloudy light, and

"she answered, in a low voice

"so, tell me then. It may be
making mine heavier."

"A burden, mother," said Han-

"What is right, but I fear that

"ought it upon myself, when it may

"then repeated the conversation

between Seth Wattles and herself

impassioned dream of her heart,

and permitted to escape her. She

second time, and thus her own sense

if explained.

"Hannah waited quietly until the story

"right, Hannah," she said, after a pause

"thee can justly reproach thyself for

"encouragement. He is a very vain and

"well-meaning. It is not right to hold

"any one, but I don't mind telling thee that

"him comes very near being that. Thee

"happy, Hannah, with a husband whom thee

"say, I mean something more—whom thee

"wiser and stronger than thyself."

"A transient flush passed over the daughter's face

"no reply.

"Thee has a gift, I know," the widow continued,

"learned much. There is a knowledge, though, that

"thy experience of life, and though I feel my ignorance

"any ways, compared to thy learning, there are some

"which I am able to see more clearly than thee. It re-

Turning away

her's worn, pale

and then took her

"and I ought

lighten thy own

Hannah. "I know

I may have un-

might have been

ion which had

, omitting only

a glimpse of

did not dare to

of humiliatio

was finish

e, "and I

having gi

ignorant

and prej

that my fe

never

did r

did r

ce,

book-learning to read the heart, and there is less difference in the hearts of women than thee may suppose. We cannot be wholly independent of the men : we need their help and companionship : we acknowledge their power even while we resist it. There are defects in us which we find supplied in them, as we supply theirs where marriage is perfect and holy. But we cannot know this, except through our own experience. I have agreed with thee in most of thy views about the rights of our sex, but thee never can be entirely wise on this subject so long as thee remains single. No, Hannah, thee won't think hard of me for saying it, but thee does not yet truly know either woman or man. I have often quietly wished that thee had not set thy heart against marriage. The Lord seems to have intended a mate for every one, so that none of His children should be left alone, and thee should not shut thy eyes against the signs He gives.

“Mother!”

Even while uttering this exclamation, into which she was startled by the unexpected words of her mother, Hannah Thurston felt that she was betraying herself.

“Child! child! thy father's eyes—thee has his very look! I am concerned on thy account, Hannah. Perhaps I have been mistaken in thee, as I was mistaken in him. Oh, if I could have known him in time! I shall not be much longer with thee, my daughter, and if I tell thee how I failed in my duty it may help thee to perform thine, if—if my prayers for thy sake should be fulfilled.”

The widow paused, agitated by the recollections which her own words evoked. The tears trickled down her pale cheeks, but she quietly wiped them away. Her countenance thus changed from its usual placid repose, Hannah was shocked to see how weak and wasted it had grown during the winter. The parting, which she did not dare to contemplate, might be nearer than she had anticipated.

“Do not say any thing that might give thee pain,” she said.

"Give thyself no concern, child. It will bring me relief. I have often felt moved to tell thee, but there seemed to be no fitting time before now."

"Is it about my father?" Hannah asked.

"Yes, Hannah. I wish he could have lived long enough to leave his face in thy memory, but it was not to be. Thee often reminds me of him, especially when I feel that there is something in thy nature beyond my reach. I was past thy age when we were married, and he was no longer a young man. We had known each other for some years, but nothing passed between us that younger persons would have called love. I was sincerely drawn towards him, and it seemed right that my life should become a part of his. It came to me as a natural change. Richard was not a man of many words; he was considered grave and stern; and when he first looked upon me with only a gentle smile on his face, I knew that his heart had made choice of me. From that time, although it was long before he spoke his mind, I accustomed myself to think of him as my husband. This may seem strange to thee, and, indeed, I never confessed it to him. When we came to live together, and I found, from every circumstance of our daily life, how good and just ~~he~~ ^{he} was, how strong and upright and rigid in the ways that seemed right to him, I leaned upon him as a helper and looked up ^{to him} with reverence and love. An unkind word never passed between us. ^When I happened to be wrong in any thing, he knew ^{how} to tell me so gently and kindly that I was set right, knowing how. ~~He~~ ^{He} was never wrong. Our marriage was a season of perfect peace—yes, to me, because my contentment made me careless, blind.

"I sometimes noticed that his eyes rested on me with a singular expression, and I wondered what was in his mind. There was something unsatisfied in his face, a look that I knew not what, but more than the world contains. ^{as} When I said: 'Is any thing the matter, Richard?', ^{he}

it will soon be over.' I made him undress and go to bed, for my anxiety gave me strength. Then I sent for the doctor, without telling Richard what I had done. It was evening when the doctor came; thee was rather fretful that day, and I had taken thee into another room, for fear Richard might be disturbed. I only noticed that the doctor stayed a long time, but they were old friends, I thought, and might like to talk. By the time I had put thee to sleep, he had left and Richard was alone. I went directly to him. 'What is thee to take?' I asked. 'Nothing,' he said, so quietly that I ought to have been relieved, but—I do not know how it was—I turned to him trembling like a leaf, and cried out: 'Richard, thee has not told me all!'

"'Yes, all, Gulielma,' said he, 'nothing will help: I must leave thee.' I stared at him a while, trying to stand still, while every thing in the room went spinning around me, until I saw nothing more. I was lying beside him on the bed when I came to myself. My hair was wet: he had picked me up, poured water on his handkerchief and bathed my face. When I opened my eyes, he was leaning over me, looking into my eyes with a look I cannot describe: He breathed hard and painfully, and his voice was husky. 'I have frightened thee, Gulielma,' said he; 'but—but can thee not resign thyself to lose me?' His look seemed to draw my very soul from me; I cried, with a loud and bitter cry, 'Richard, Richard, take me with thee!' and threw my arms around his neck. Oh, my child, how can I tell thee the rest? He put away my arms, he held me back, and gasped, as he looked at me with burning eyes: 'Take care what thee says, Gulielma; I am dying, and thee dare not deceive me; does thee love me as I love thee—more than life, more, the Lord pardon me, more than heaven?' For the first time, I knew that I did. If it was a sin, it has been expiated. I cannot remember what was said, after that. It was all clear between us, and he would allow no blame to rest on me; but he could not speak, except at intervals. He held my hand all night, pressing it faintly in his sleep. The next day he died.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH SPRING OPENS.

THE rainy Sunday was the precursor of a thaw, which lasted for a fortnight, and stripped the landscapes of Ptolemy of every particle of snow, except such as found a lodgment in fence-corners, behind walls, or in shaded ravines. The wands of the willow clumps along the streams brightened to a vivid yellow, and the myriad twigs of low-lying thickets blushed purple with returning sap. Frozen nights and muddy days enough were yet in store; but with every week the sun gained confidence in his own alchemy, and the edge of the north-wind was blunted. Very slowly, indeed, a green shimmer crept up through the brown, dead grass; the fir-woods breathed a resinous breath of awaking; pale green eyes peeped from the buds of the garden-lilacs, and, finally, like a tender child, ignorant of danger, the crocus came forth full blown and shamed the cowardly hesitation of the great oaks and elms.

During this season, Woodbury's intercourse with the society of the village was mostly suspended. After the termination of the Great Sewing-Union, families fell back into their narrower circles, and rested for a time both from their social and their charitable labors. Even the itinerant prophets and philanthropists ceased their visits, leaving Ptolemy in its normal darkness. Only Mr. Dyce, it was whispered, had again made his appearance at the Merryfields', where his spiritual sessions were attended by a select circle of the initiated. Neither Woodbury nor Mr. Waldo had been again invited to attend.

All minor gossip, however, was lost sight of, in the interest

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ere they all, apparently unchanged ; but, ~~out~~, reverently
ked upon them for the sake of the Past. ~~st~~, he felt that
ide was to be truly *his* home, its features must, to
ent, be moulded by his own taste. The ~~he~~ old arrange-
ould not be retained, simply for the sake of the old
ons ; the place must breathe an atmos- ~~phere~~ of life,
eath. In spite of the admirable situation ~~and~~ the trained
oundings had been much neglected, ~~and~~ for beauty.
ts master daily detected new capacities ~~to~~ the ossified
ng of all this, however, suggested itself ~~bury~~ was but a
the housekeeper. In her eyes, Wood ~~cry~~ down from
f Mrs. Dennison, and that lady would ~~plants~~ and he
e to forbid the position of her favorite ~~abb~~ was almo
om being changed. Hence, Mrs. Ba ~~, on~~ Woodbu
l with astonishment, one warm morning,
o her, as they stood in the garden :
hall extend the garden, so as to take i ~~n another~~
The ground must be first prepared, so ~~it can sca~~
e this spring ; but, at least, this first r ~~ow of cur~~
taken up and set beyond the second. ~~The vege~~
en be partly hidden from sight, and the ~~se beds~~
l with flowers.”
the land !” exclaimed the housekeeper.
ear o’ sich a thing ! Where’ll you get y ~~ur c~~
d like to know ? ‘They won’t bear a mit ~~e if~~
, now. Besides, where am I to plant p ~~ear~~
if you put flowers here ?”
ere,” said Woodbury, pointing to the oth ~~er~~
1.
hy, I *had* ’em there last summer. Here
ges was, is the right place. To my thi ~~ng~~
s enough, as it is. Not that I’d take a ~~ny~~
as always fond of ’em, and she was satis ~~fy~~
of the garden. But there’s them that think ~~g~~
r. ‘T’an’t any too big as it was, and if yo ~~u~~
ere ground, we’ll run out o’ vegetables af ~~ter~~

mer's over. Then, I'll git the blame, all over the neighborhood. People knows I 'tend to it."

"Mrs. Babb," said Woodbury, a little sternly, "I shall take care that your reputation does not suffer. It is my intention to engage an experienced gardener, who will take all this work off your hands, for the future. But the improvements I intend to make cannot be carried out immediately, and I must ask you to superintend the planting, this spring. You shall have sufficient ground for all the vegetables we need, and it can make little difference to you where they grow."

The housekeeper did not venture upon any further remonstrance, but her heart was filled with gall and bitterness. She could not deny to herself Woodbury's right to do what he pleased with his own, but such innovations struck her as being almost criminal. They opened the door to endless confusions, which it distressed her to contemplate, and the end whereof she could not foresee.

That evening, as Bute was shelling his seed-corn in the kitchen, he noticed that her thin lips were a little more tightly compressed than usual, while she plied her knitting-needles with an energy that betrayed a serious disturbance of mind. Bute gave himself no concern, however, well knowing that, whatever it was, he should hear it in good time.

Mrs. Babb sighed in her usual wheezy manner, drawing up and letting down her shoulders at the same time, and knit a few minutes longer, with her eyes fixed on the kitchen clock. At last she said: "Ah, yes, it's well she's gone."

Bute looked up, but as she was still inspecting the clock, he said nothing.

"I was afeard things couldn't stay as they was," she again remarked.

Bute picked up a fresh ear, and began grinding the butt-end with a cob, to loosen the grains.

"It's hard to see sich things a-comin' on, in a body's old days," groaned the housekeeper. This time her gaze was removed from the clock, and fell grimly upon her adopted son.

indifferent, it had not deadened his nature to the subtle magic of spring. A more delicate languor than that of the tropics crept over him in the balmy mornings; all sounds and odors of the season fostered it, and new images began to obtrude upon his sleeping as well as his waking dreams. He knew the symptoms, and rejoiced over the reappearance of the old disease. It was not now the fever of youth, ignorantly given up to its own illusions. He could count the accelerated pulsations, hold the visions steadily fast as they arose in his brain, and analyze while he enjoyed them. Love and Experience must now go hand in hand, and if an object presented itself, the latter must approve while the former embraced.

Reviewing, in his mind, the women whom he knew, there was not one, he confessed to himself, whom he would ever, probably, be able to love. His acquaintances in New York were bright, lively girls—the associates of his nieces—in some of whom, no doubt, there was a firm basis of noble feminine character. It could not be otherwise; yet the woman who must share his seclusion, finding in him, principally, her society, in his home her recreation, in his happiness her own, could scarcely be found in that circle. Coming back to Ptolemy, his survey was equally discouraging. He could never overlook a lack of intellectual culture in his wife. Who possessed that, unless, indeed, Hannah Thurston? She, he admitted, had both exquisite taste and a degree of culture remarkable for the opportunities she enjoyed; but a union with her would be a perpetual torment. She, with her morbid notions of right, seeing an unpardonable sin in every innocent personal habit! What little she had observed of his external life had evidently inspired her with a strong dislike of him; how could she bear to know him as he was—to look over the pages of his past life? *His* wife, he felt, must be allowed no illusions. If she could not find enough of truth and manliness in his heart to counterbalance past errors and present defects, she should find no admittance there.

In spite of these unavailing reviews, one important result

was attained. He would no longer, as heretofore, shrink from the approach of love. From whatever quarter the guest might come, the door should be found open, and the word "Welcome," woven of the evergreen leaves of immortal longing, should greet the arrival.

•

room, where the medium, with his sallow, unwholesome face, sat at an open window, absorbed in the perusal of a thick pamphlet. He rose and saluted Woodbury, though by no means with cordiality.

"How delightful a home you have here, Mr. Merryfield," Woodbury said. "You need not wish to change places with any one. An independent American farmer, with his affairs in such complete order that the work almost goes on of itself, from year to year, seems to me the most fortunate of men."

"Well—yes—I ought to be satisfied," answered the host: "I sometimes wish for a wider sphere, but I suppose it's best as it is."

"Oh, be sure of that!" exclaimed Woodbury: "neither is your sphere a narrow one, if it is rightly filled."

"Nothing is best as it is," growled Mr. Dyce, from the window, at the same time; "private property, family, isolated labor, are all wrong."

Woodbury turned to the speaker, with a sudden doubt of his sanity, but Mr. Merryfield was not in the least surprised.

"You know, Mr. Dyce," said he, "that I can't go that far. The human race may come to that in the course of time, as it were, but I'm too old to begin."

"Nobody is too old for the Truth," rejoined the medium, so insolently that Woodbury felt an itching desire to slap him in the face,—“especially, when it's already demonstrated. Here's the whole thing,” he continued, giving the pamphlet a whack on the window-sill: “read it, and you'll find how much better off we are without those selfish institutions, marriage and the right to property.”

"What is it?" asked Woodbury.

"It's the annual report of the Perfectionists. They have a community near Aqueanda, where their principles are put in practice. Every thing is in common: labor is so divided that no one feels the burden, yet all live comfortably. The children are brought up all together, and so the drudgery of a family is

avoided. Besides, love is not slavery, but freedom, and the affections are true because they do not wear legal chains."

"Good God! Is this true?" exclaimed Woodbury, turning to Mr. Merryfield.

"I believe it is," he answered. "I've read part of the report, and there are queer things in it. Even if the doctrine is right, I don't think mankind is fit for it yet. I shouldn't like, even, to let everybody read that book: though, to be sure, we might be much more outspoken than we are."

"Read it," said Mr. Dyce, thrusting the pamphlet into Woodbury's hand. "It's unanswerable. If you are not blinded by the lies and hypocrisies of Society, you will see what the true life of Man should be. Society is the Fall, sir, and we can restore the original paradise of Adam whenever we choose to free ourselves from its tyranny."

"No doubt, provided we are naturally sinless, like Adam," Woodbury could not help saying, as he took the pamphlet. He had no scruples in receiving and reading it, for he was not one of those delicate, effeminate minds, who are afraid to look on error lest they may be infected. His principles were so well-based that every shock only settled them the more firmly. He had never preferred ignorance to unpleasant knowledge, and all of the latter which he had gained had not touched the sound manliness of his nature.

"We are!" cried Mr. Dyce, in answer to his remark. "The doctrine of original sin is the basis of all the wrongs of society. It is false. Human nature is pure in all its instincts, and we distort it by our selfish laws. Our life is artificial and unnatural. If we had no rights of property we should have no theft: if we had no law of marriage we should have no licentiousness: if we had no Governments, we should have no war."

Mr. Merryfield did not seem able to answer these declarations, absurd as they were, and Woodbury kept silent, from self-respect. The former, however, was stronger in his instincts than in his powers of argument, and shrank, with a sense of

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repugnance, from a theory which he was unable to comprehend. Mr. Dyce's prolonged visit was beginning to be disagreeable to him. His ambition to be considered a prominent member was his weak side, and his freely-offered hospitality was his strong side. The consideration which had been imposed upon him by the various apostles had given him a considerable amount of respect, but the secret fear of losing his place had prevented him, so, from defending himself.

Dyce, on the other hand, was one of those men who are easily shaken off. He led a desultory life, here and there, through New York and the New England States, presiding at various sessions in the houses of the believers, among whom he had acquired a certain amount of reputation as a medium. Sometimes his performances were held in public, and he earned enough in this way to pay his necessary expenses. When he discovered a belief in good family, in good circumstances, especially where the family was well supplied, he would pitch his tent, for days, or as circumstances favored, in the desert. Such an oasis would have been the discomfiture of the meek host at his prolonged stay, which would have been sufficiently palpable to a man of the least delicacy of feeling. It was either unnoticed by him, or contemptuously ignored, as Woodbury read the man at a glance, and also received, also, a suspicion of Mr. Merryfield's impatience at his stay; but himself, had little patience with the latter's absurdities, and quite content that he should endure the punishment invoked.

Putting the pamphlet in his pocket, and turning to Mr. Dyce, he said: "I shall read this, if only to find out the point of the Moral Reform which Progress becomes Reaction—where the firm cool hands with Depravity." He then turned from the window, and the medium's sallow face grew livid, at the sight of which these words were spoken. He half-started, but sank back again, and turning his head to a contemptuous snort from his thin nostrils.

"There is mischief in that man," thought Woodbury.

Mr. Merryfield, in spite of his trepidation—for he was a thorough physical coward, and the moral courage on which he plumed himself was a sham article, principally composed of vanity—nevertheless felt a sense of relief from Woodbury's composed, indifferent air. Here, at least, was one man who could meet the vampire unconcernedly, and drive, if need be, a stake through his gorged carcass. For once, he regretted that he did not possess a similar quality. It was almost resistance, he was aware, and the man capable of it might probably be guilty of the crime (as he considered it) of using physical force; but he dimly recognized it in a refreshing element of strength. He did not feel quite so helpless as usual in Woodbury's presence, after that.

Still, he dreaded a continuance of the conversation. "Will you come, as it were"—said he; "that is, would you like"—

Woodbury, who had turned his back upon Mr. Dyce, after speaking, suddenly interrupted him with: "How do you do, Mrs. Merryfield?"

The mistress of the house, passing through the hall, had paused at the open door. Behind her came Hannah Thurston, in her bonnet, with a satchel on her arm.

After the greetings were over, Mrs. Merryfield said: "We were going into the garden."

"Pray, allow me to accompany you," said Woodbury.

"Oh, yes, if you care about flowers and things."

The garden was laid out on the usual plan: a central alley, bordered with flower-beds, vegetables beyond, and currants planted along the fence. It lay open to the sun, sheltered by a spur of the eastern ridge, and by the orchard to the left of the house. In one corner stood a Judas-tree, every spray thickly hung with the vivid rose-colored blossoms. The flowers were farther advanced than at Lakeside, for the situation was much lower and warmer, and there had been no late frosts. The hyacinths reared their blue and pink pagodas, filling the walk with their opulent breath; the thick green buds of the tulips

"I did not mean to be dictatorial; but the man is thoroughly false and bad."

"Do you know any thing of him?" she asked.

"Only what I have myself observed. I have learned to trust my instincts, because I find that what we call instinct is only a rapid and subtle faculty of observation. A man can never completely disguise himself, and we therefore see him most truly at the first glance, before his powers of deception can be exercised upon us."

"It may be true," she said, as if speaking to herself, "but one's prejudices are so arbitrary. How can we know that we are right, in yielding to them?"

For a moment, a sharp retort hovered on Woodbury's tongue. How can we know, he might have said, that we are right in accepting views, the extreme character of which is self-evident? How can we, occupying an exceptional place, dare to pronounce rigid, unmitigated judgment on all the rest of mankind? But the balmy spring day toned him to gentleness. The old enchantment of female presence stole over him, as when it surrounded each fair face with a nimbus, to the narcotized vision of youth. One glance at his companion swept away the harsh words. A tender gleam of color flushed her cheeks, and the lines of her perfect lips were touched with a pensive softness. Her eyes, fixed at the moment on the hill beyond the farther valley, were almost as soft as a violet in hue. He had never before seen her in the strong test of sunshine, and remarked that for a face like hers it was no disenchantment. She might be narrow and bigoted, he felt, but she was nevertheless true, earnest, and pure.

"We are *not* required to exhibit our prejudices," he said. "In Society, disagreeable persons are still individuals, and have certain claims upon us. But, after all the latitude we are required to grant, a basis of character must be exacted. Do you think a man consciously false and depraved should be tolerated on account of a coincidence in opinions?"

"Certainly not," she replied.

deck, watching the avalanches tumbling down from the Jungfrau."

"You have been in Switzerland, Mr. Woodbury!" she exclaimed, with animation.

"Yes, on my way from England to India."

He described to her his Swiss tour, inspired to prolong the narrative by the eager interest she exhibited. The landscapes of the higher Alps stood clear in his memory, and he had the faculty of translating them distinctly into words. Commencing with the valley of the Reuss, he took her with him over the passes of the Furca and the Grimsel, and had only reached the falls of the Aar, when the gate of the Widow Thurston's cottage shut down upon the Alpine trail.

"We will finish the trip another time," said Woodbury, as he opened the gate for her.

"How much I thank you! I seem to have been in Switzerland, myself. I think I shall be able to sing the song better, from knowing its scenery."

She offered him her hand, which he pressed cordially. "I should like to call upon your mother again," he said.

"She will be very glad to see you."

As he walked down the street towards the Cimmerian parsonage, his thoughts ran somewhat in this wise: "How much natural poetry and enthusiasm that girl has in her nature! It is refreshing to describe any thing to her, she is so absorbed in receiving it. What a splendid creature she might have become, under other circumstances! But here she is hopelessly warped and distorted. Nature intended her for a woman and a wife, and the rôle of a man and an apostle is a monstrous perversion. I do not know whether she most attracts me through what she might have been, or repels me through what she is. She suggests the woman I am seeking, only to show me how vain the search must be. I am afraid I shall have to give it up." Pursuing these reflections, he was about passing the parsonage without recognizing it, when a cheery voice rang out to him from the open door:

"Have you lost the way, Mr. Woodbury?"

"Not lost, but gone before," said he, as he turned back to the gate.

"What profanity!" exclaimed Mrs. Waldo, though she laughed at the same time. "Come in: our serious season is over. I suppose I ought to keep a melancholy face, for two weeks longer, to encourage the new converts, but what is one to do, when one's nature is dead against it?"

"Ah, Mrs. Waldo," replied Woodbury, "if you suffered under your faith, instead of rejoicing in it, I should doubt your Christianity. I look upon myself as one of your converts."

"I am afraid you are given to backsliding."

"Only for the pleasure of being reconverted," said he; "but come—be my mother-confessoress. I am in great doubt and perplexity."

"And you come to a woman for help? Delightful!"

"Even so. Do you remember what you said to me, when I picked you up out of the wreck, last winter? But I see you do not. Mrs. Fortitude Babb is a tyrant."

Mrs. Waldo was not deceived by this mock lamentation. He would not first have felt the tyranny now, she knew, unless a stronger feeling made it irksome.

"Ah ha! you have found it out," she said. "Well—you know the remedy."

"Yes, I know it; but what I do not know is—the woman who should take her place."

"Don't you?" said Mrs. Waldo, with a sigh, "then, of course, I do not."

"I walked from Merryfield's, this afternoon, with Hannah Thurston," he presently remarked.

"Well?" she asked eagerly.

"What a perversion of a fine woman! I lose my temper when I think of it. I came very near being rude to her."

"You rude?" exclaimed Mrs. Waldo, "then she must have provoked you beyond endurance."

"Not by any thing she said, but simply by what she is."

"What, pray?"

"A 'strong-minded woman.' Heaven keep me from all such! I have will enough for two, and my household shall never have more than one head."

"That's sound doctrine," said Mr. Waldo, hearing the last words as he entered the room.

in breadth, thrust out like the corner of a pedestal upon which the hill had formerly rested. The stream, after lending a part of its strength to drive a saw-mill at the mouth of the glen, passed swiftly across the terrace, twisting its way through broken, rocky ground, to the farther edge, whence it tumbled in a cataract to the valley. The wall of rock was crowned with a thick growth of pine, cedar, maple, and aspen trees, and the stream, for the last hundred yards of its course, slid through deep, cool shadows, to flash all the more dazzlingly into the sunshine of its fall. From the brink there were lovely views of the valley and lake; and even within the grove, as far as a flat rock, which served as a table for the gay parties, penetrated glimpses of the airy distance.

The other members of the little band of "Reformers" in Ptolemy were invited to take part in the picnic. The Whitlows desired and expected this, and would have considered themselves slighted, had the invitations been omitted. Mrs. Waldo was included; at the request of Hannah Thurston, who knew her need of recreation and her enjoyment of it. Besides, she was sure that Mr. Dyce would be there, and suspected the presence of Seth Wattles, and she felt the advantage of being accompanied by a brave and sensible friend. Mr. Waldo was obliged to attend a meeting of the Trustees of the Cimmerian Church, and so the two women, taking possession of his phlegmatic horse and superannuated gig, started early in the afternoon for the appointed spot. Before reaching the gate to the farm-house, they overtook Seth Wattles and Mr. Tanner, on foot, the latter carrying his flute in his hand. He was celebrated throughout the neighborhood for his performance of "*Love Not*" and "*The Pirate's Serenade*," on that instrument.

The spot was reached by following the highway, past the foot of Roaring Brook cataract, and then taking a side-road which led across the embaying curve of the valley and, ascended to the saw-mill at the mouth of the glen. Some of the party had gone directly across the fields from the Merryfield

HANNAH THURSTON :

Something in his appearance caused her to stop and perceive her, more closely. At the same instant he perceived her, and lightly up to his horse out of the road, and cantered

“Here!” he exclaimed; “is it a camp-meeting?”
“Where have you been?”
“No; it is to monopolize all the secular enjoyments.”
“No; it is a small, but select, though I say it.”

“Who are here?” he asked, leaning forward on his hands and peering into the shade—“My God!”
Waldo, watching his countenance with merry eyes, saw a look of horror, quick as lightning, pass over his face. With one bound he was off the horse, which sprang away startled, and he dashed headlong into the stream. It she saw him

Miss Wheatley, in whom the climbing propensity was at its height, had caught sight of a bunch of wild geese. The stream turned. Near the top of a rock, around which the stream flowed down for the purpose of being a spring, she reached as to be tantalized. Stretching her arms, she seized the bunch, at which she jerked with all her force. The rock, did not resist. The resistance was whirled off. She was on the rock, and in an instant she was in the stream. To the water she plunged. It was a little below; a few bounds brought him to the swift current. He had no time to think of the consequences. The stream, although not more than a few feet deep and twenty in breadth, bore him along. He found it impossible to gain his feet. Where the current sheered toward the opposite

Waldo saw her dangerous position on the moment the catastrophe occurred. With a bound he perceived that the nearest point of the shore was a little below; a few bounds brought him to the swift current. He had no time to think of the consequences. The stream, although not more than a few feet deep and twenty in breadth, bore him along. He found it impossible to gain his feet. Where the current sheered toward the opposite

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half the remaining distance, or keep in the middle of the current, and trust to the chance of grasping a rock which rose a little above the water, a few feet in advance of the fall. He was an experienced swimmer, but a few strokes convinced him that the first plan would not succeed. Before reaching the rock the water grew deeper, and the current whirled in strong eddies, which would give him some little power to direct his course. In a second they seethed around him, and though the bottom fell away from under his feet, he felt a sudden support from the back water from the rock. On the tremendous effort and he reached it.

To the agonized spectators on the bank, the scene was terrible. Unable to avert their eyes from the two lives sweeping like a flash to destruction—feeling, instinctively, that there was no instantaneous power of action which could save them—uttered low, incoherent cries, too benumbed to speak or think. Only Seth and Dyce, who had conveyed the board to the head of the fall, were hurriedly endeavoring to thrust it out over the water. In their excitement they had placed it too low to reach the rock.

"Bring it further up!" shouted Mr. Whitlow.

Seth, nervously attempting to slide it up the bank, allowed the outer end to drop into the current. It was instantly twisted out of his hands and whirled over the fall.

Woodbury had gained a firm hold of the rock, but the water was up to his shoulders, the conflicting currents tugged him this way and that, and he was unable to clasp his charge securely. Her arms were still tight about his neck, but if her strength should give way, their situation would become critical. He saw the effort made for their rescue, and its failure.

"Another board!" he shouted.

Seth and Dyce darted through the grove in search of one, while Merryfield, more practical, made off with his most speed for the saw-mill. Hannah Thurston, in spite of her relief at the escape, recognized the danger which still imperiled her. A single glance showed her the difficulty under which Woodbury

HANNAH THURSTON :

he drew the wet, sticky slip-noose of the scarf over ~~the~~er Phillis's
 and one arm, bringing it under her elbow before ~~she~~e he could
 sen her hold upon his neck. Thrusting the board ~~under~~ under this
 a, it was an easier task to disengage the other.
 Wind the end of the shawl around that sapling ~~and~~ing beside
 u!" he called to Hannah Thurston. "One of you ~~go~~go below
 meet her."
 Mrs. Waldo was on the spot before his words were ~~finished~~ finished.
 'Now, hold fast, my little girl, and you will be ~~safe~~ safe in a
 nute. Ready!" he cried.
 Phillis obeyed, rather through blind trust in him, ~~than~~han from
 r consciousness of what was going on. The poor ~~creature~~ creature
 as chilled and exhausted, half strangled by the water ~~she~~ she had
 allowed, and wild with terror. Her arms having ~~been~~ce been
 osened, she clasped them again around the board ~~in~~in a last
 nvulsive effort of strength. Woodbury let go the ~~raft~~ail raft,
 hich, impelled by the dragging weight of the shawls ~~to~~o move
 once half-way across the stream. Then it began ~~to~~gulf it.
 ore slowly, and the force of the current seemed to in ~~but~~but her
 or a moment the water rushed over the child's head, ~~and~~and she
 ess was already within reach of Mrs. Waldo's hand, ~~Mrs.~~ Mrs.
 as drawn upon the bank, gasping and nearly insensible ~~er, who~~er, who
 Merryfield picked her up and carried her to the mothe
 ill lay upon the ground, with her face in her hands.
 Woodbury, relieved of his burden, now held his ~~position~~ position
 with less difficulty. The coldness of the water, not y ~~tem-~~t tem-
 ered by the few days of summer, nevertheless, began ~~to~~to be-
 umb him, and he was obliged to struggle against a ~~growing~~growing
 exhaustion. Hannah Thurston, as soon as the child ~~was~~ was
 escued, drew in the board, examined the knots of the ~~shawls~~shawls,
 nd gathered them together for another throw; but ~~at~~at the
 ame instant Mr. Merryfield, out of breath and unable to ~~speak~~speak,
 ppeared with a plank on his shoulder. With the aid ~~of~~of the
 others, the end was secured between two trees, and ~~it~~it was
 hen run out above the water, a little below the rock, ~~where~~where
 he stream was shallower. Woodbury cautiously slid ~~do~~do wn,

On Monday, the Wintlows took their departure for Niagara, greatly to the relief of their hosts. As they do not appear again in the course of this history, we may hope that the remainder of their journey was agreeable.

CHAPTER. XVI.

CONCERNING AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY TO TIBERIUS.

Two days after the departure of the Whitlows, Mr. Dyce, during breakfast, announced his intention of leaving Ptolemy. "I have promised to visit the Community," said he, "and it is now a pleasant time to be there. Could you lend me your horse and carriage as far as Tiberius, Merryfield?"

"Not to-day, I guess," said the farmer; "I must go to Mulligansville this afternoon, to see about buying another cow, and Henry has the hill-field to hoe. You could take Jinny and the carriage, but how would I get them back again?"

"I will go," said his wife, with an unusual eagerness. "I must go there soon, any way. I've things to buy, you know, James, and there's Mrs. Nevins that I've been owing a visit to, this ever so long."

"Well, if you want to, Sarah," he answered, "I've nothing against it. Are you sure it won't be too much for you? You know you've been having extra work, and you're not strong."

Mrs. Merryfield drew up the corners of her mouth, and gave a spasmodic sob. "Yes, I know I am the weaker vessel," she wailed, "and my own judgment don't pass for any thing."

"Sarah, Sarah, don't be foolish!" said her husband; "you know I never interfere unreasonably with your ways. You can do as you please. I spoke for your own good, and you needn't cry about it."

He rose with an impatient air, and left the table. He could not but admit to himself, sometimes, that the happiness of his married life had not increased in proportion to his progress in

rule of defraying all such expenses as they arose. Hence his crops were never mortgaged in advance, and by waiting until they could be sold to the best advantage, he prospered from year to year.

When he reached home again, it was nearly four o'clock. Putting up his horse, he entered the house and went directly to the old-fashioned mixture of book-case, writing-desk, and chest of drawers, which stood in a corner of the sitting-room. He must make a note of the purchase, and, since he was alone, might as well spend an hour, he thought, in looking over his papers and making his calculations for the summer.

He was very methodical in his business arrangements, and the desk was in such perfect order that he always knew the exact place of each particular paper. This was one of the points of controversy with his wife, which he never yielded: he insisted that she should not open the desk in his absence. This time, however, as he seated himself, drew out the supports for the lid, and let it down upon them, his exact eye showed him that something had been disturbed. The papers in one of the pigeon-holes projected a little further than usual, and the corners were not square as they should be. Besides, the pile appeared to be diminished in height. He knew every paper the pigeon-hole contained, took them out and ran rapidly through them. One was missing!—an envelope, containing bonds of the New York Central Railroad, to the amount of three thousand dollars, the private property of his wife. It was the investment of a sum which she had inherited at her father's death, made in her own name, and the interest of which she had always received for her separate-use.

He leaned back in his chair, thunderstruck at the discovery: Could one of the servants have taken the envelope? Impossible. Dyce?—how should he know where to find it? Evidently, nothing else had been touched. Had his wife, perhaps, taken it with her, to draw the semi-annual interest at Tiberius? It was not yet due. Mechanically, hardly conscious of what he suspected or feared, he arose and went up-stairs. In the bed-

HANNAH THURSTON:

to her so long that I've lost my rightful inheritance."

One means of help suggested itself to his mind, and immediately accepted. Leaving his horse at the door and ordering a fast, fresh animal and a light buggy, Mr. Waldo was in his "study," which was one of his wife's sitting-rooms. He was engaged in an epistolary controversy with a clergyman of the Free-will Baptist Church, ally reading aloud a paragraph as he wrote. His at work in remaking an old dress, listened and they were both startled by the entrance of Mr. Waldo, whose agitation was apparent in his face, and still his voice, as he greeted them.

"What has happened?" exclaimed Mrs. Waldo.

"I don't hardly know, as yet," he stammered.

"Your help, Mr. Waldo. Come with me—I'm going for my wife"— Here he paused, blushing with

for her.

"Would you rather speak to my husband alone?"

Waldo, rising from her seat.

"No, you must hear the rest, now," he answered.

"A good woman, Mrs. Waldo—good and true, and pious too, can help. Sarah wants to leave me, and I must go back—I *must*, this night."

He then told them, briefly and brokenly, his painful story. Amazement and pity filled the hearts of the two girls, who felt his misfortune almost as keenly as if it were their own. Mrs. Waldo commenced making the few arrangements necessary for her husband's departure, even before he had uttered a word. When the team was announced, she took Mr. Merryfield's hand and bade him God-speed in her eyes. The poor man was too much moved. Then, catching her husband's arm, as he was issuing from the room, she whispered earnestly, "No harshness—she must be coaxed and persuaded."

"I wish it were you who were going, my good wife," said Mr. Waldo, kissing her; "*you* would make no mistake. But be sure that I will act tenderly and carefully."

They drove away. She watched them turn the next corner, and went into the house powerfully excited by such a sudden and singular catastrophe. Her quick, intuitive mind, and her knowledge of Mrs. Merryfield's weak points, enabled her to comprehend the action more correctly than the husband himself. This very knowledge was the source of her greatest anxiety; for she saw that the success of the journey hung by a hair. Having already committed herself, Mrs. Merryfield, she foresaw, would not give up her plan from the discovery of it, merely. She was not the woman to fall at her husband's feet, repentant, at the first sight of him, and meekly return to her forsaken home. The utmost tact would be required—tact of a kind, of which, with all her respect for the sex, she felt that a man was not capable.

The more she pondered on the matter, the more restless and anxious she grew. Her husband's last words remained in her ears: "*You* would make no mistake." That was not certain, but she would make none, she knew, which could not at once be rectified. An inner voice continually said to her, "Go!" Her unrest became at last insupportable; she went to the stable, and harnessed their horse to the old gig with her own hands. Then taking her shawl, and thrusting some refreshments into a basket—for she would not delay even long enough to make a cup of tea—she clambered into the creaking vehicle, and drove off.

Mrs. Waldo, however, like many good women whose moral courage is equal to any emergency, was in some respects a ridiculous coward. Even in company with her husband, she never passed along the country roads, at night, without an incessant sensation of fear, which had no positive shape, and therefore could not be battled against. It was now six o'clock, and the darkness would be upon her long before she could reach Tiberius. The thought of making the journey alone,

listan, was cut in many places, and lay in balmy windrows. The air was still and warm, and dragon-flies, emitting blue and emerald gleams from their long wings, hovered in zigzag lines along the brooksides. Now and then a thrush fluted from the alder-thickets, or an oriole flashed like a lighted brand through the shadows of the elms. The broad valley basked in the lazy enjoyment of its opulent summer hues; and whatever sounds arose from its bosom, they all possessed a tone of passive content or active joy. But the travellers felt nothing of all this beauty: that repose of the spiritual nature, in which the features of the external world are truly recognized, had been rudely disturbed.

They passed the Merryfield farm-house. How sadly at variance with its sunny air of peace was the tragic secret of its owners, which the two women carried with them! The huge weeping willow trailed its hanging masses of twigs against the gable, and here and there a rose-tree thrust its arm through the white garden paling and waved a bunch of crimson, as if to say: "Come in and see how we are blooming!" Towards the barn, the field-hand was letting down bars for the waiting cows, and the servant-girl issued from the kitchen-door with her tin milk-kettle, as they gazed. What a mockery it all seemed!

A little further, and the cataract thundered on their right. All below the rocky wall lay in shadow, but the trees on its crest were still touched by the sun, and thin wreaths of spray, whirling upward, were suddenly converted into dust of gold. Hannah Thurston looked up at the silent grove, and shuddered as she recalled the picture she had last seen there. The brook could never again wear to her its former aspect of wayward, impetuous jubilation. Under its green crystal and glassy slides lurked an element of terror, of pitiless cruelty. Yet even the minutes of agonizing suspense she had there endured were already softened in her memory, and seemed less terrible than the similar trial which awaited her.

Near the entrance to Lakeside they met Bute Wilson, with

a yoke of oxen. He recognized the old gig, and with a loud "Haw, Buck,—come hither!" drew his team off the road."

"Takin' a drive, are ye? How d'you do, Mrs. Waldo—Miss Hannah?"

"Good-evening, Bute!" said Mrs. Waldo. "How is Mr. Woodbury? I hope he has not suffered from being so long in the water."

"Bless you, no! Mr. Max. is as sound as a roach. He rid over to Tiberius this afternoon. I say, wasn't it lucky that jist *he* should ha' come along at the right time?" Bute's face glowed with pride and delight.

"It was Providential: good-by!"

Slowly climbing the long ravine, through dark woods, it was after sunset when they reached the level of the upland. The village of Anacreon soon came in sight, and they drove rapidly through, not wishing to be recognized. Beyond this point the road was broad, straight, and firm, and they could make better progress. A low arch of orange light lingered in the west, but overhead the larger stars came out, one after another. Belts of warm air enveloped them on the heights, but the dusky hollows were steeped in grateful coolness, and every tree by the roadside gave out its own peculiar odor. The ripe, antique breath of the oak, the honeyed bitter of the tulip-tree, and the perfect balsam of the hickory, were breathed upon them in turn. A few insects still chirped among the clover, and the unmated frogs serenaded, by fits, their reluctant sweethearts. At one of the farm-houses they passed, a girl, seated in the porch, was singing:

"We have lived and loved together,
Through many changing years."

Every circumstance seemed to conspire, by involuntary contrast, to force the difficult and painful task they had undertaken more distinctly upon their minds. After Mrs. Waldo had imparted all she knew, with her own conjectures of

causes of the desertion, both women were silent for a long time, feeling, perhaps, that it was impossible to arrange, in advance, any plan of action. They must trust to the suggestions which the coming interview would supply.

"I cannot understand it," said Hannah Thurston, at last. "After so many years of married life—after having children born to them, and lost, uniting them by the more sacred bond of sorrow—how is it possible? They certainly loved each other: what has become of her love?"

"She has it somewhere, yet, you may be sure," said Mrs. Waldo. "She is weak and foolish, but she does not mean to be criminal. Dyce is a dangerous man, and he has led her to the step. No other man she knows could have done it."

"Can she love him?"

"Probably not. But a strong, unscrupulous man who knows our sex, Hannah, has a vast power which most women do not understand. He picks up a hundred little threads of weakness, each of which is apparently insignificant, and twists them into a chain. He surprises us at times when our judgment is clouded, his superior reason runs in advance of our thoughts—and we don't think very hard, you know—and will surely bind us hand and foot, unless some new personality comes in to interrupt him. We women are governed by personal influences—there is no use in denying the fact. And men, of course, have the strongest."

"I have sometimes feared as much," said Hannah Thurston, sadly, "but is it not owing to a false education? Are not women trained to consider themselves inferior, and thus dependent? Do not the daughters learn the lesson of their mothers, and the fathers impress the opposite lesson on their sons?"

"I know what you mean, and you are partly right. But that is not all. There are superior women whom we look up to—I look up to you, Hannah, who are, intellectually, so far above me—but they never impress us with the same sense of power, of protecting capacity, that we feel in the presence of

almost any man. It is something I cannot explain—^{as} physical magnetism, I suppose. I respect men: **I** ^{like} because they are men, I am not ashamed to confess: ^{and} not humiliated as a woman, by acknowledging the ^{difference}.

"Habit and tradition!" Hannah Thurston exclaimed.

"I know you *will* think so, Hannah, and I am not *able* to answer you. When I hear you speak, sometimes, every word say seems just and true, but my instincts, as a woman, *are* the same. Your life has been very different from *mine* perhaps you have taken, without knowing it, a sort of *position* towards men, and have wilfully resisted their *influence* over you. For your sake, I have often longed—*you* must pardon me, if I ought not to say such a thing—some man, in every respect worthy of you, should *know* you as you are, and love you, and make you his *w*.

"Don't—don't speak of that," she whispered.

"I couldn't help it, to-night, dear," Mrs. Waldo soothed replied. "I have been thinking as I came along, what I have to thank God for having given me a good and faithful husband. *I* should never have been happy as a single woman and for that reason, no doubt, your life seems imperfect. But we cannot always judge the hearts of others *own*."

By this time the glimmering arch of summer twilight settled behind the hills, and only the stars lighted their way. The road stretched before them like a band, between the shapeless darkness of woods on either side. Indistinct murmurs of leaves and rust in the grass began to be heard, and at every sound started nervously.

"Was there ever such a coward as I am!" she said in a low voice. "If you were not with me, I should be timid?"

"There, again, I cannot judge," Miss Thurston said. "I only know that I am never alarmed at night,

proached and communicated with her. In the pure and harmonious life of the Community, she might perhaps attain to the condition of a medium, and be always surrounded by angelic company.

The afternoon was hot and they drove slowly, so that even before they reached Tiberius, the two parties of pursuers were on the way. Just as they entered the town, Mr. Woodbury passed the carriage on horseback. Glancing at its occupants, he recognized Mrs. Merryfield, bowed, and reined in his horse as if to speak, but seeing Dyce, his cordial expression became suddenly grave, and he rode on. This encounter troubled Mrs. Merryfield. A secret uneasiness had been growing upon her during the latter part of the way, and Woodbury's look inspired her with a vague fear. She involuntarily hoped that she might not meet him again, or any one she knew, before leaving Tiberius. She would not even visit Mrs. Nevins, as she had proposed. Moreover, Woodbury would probably put up at the hotel which she and her husband usually visited. Another must be selected, and she accordingly directed Dyce to drive through the town to a tavern on its northern side, not far from the railroad station.

At half-past eight in the evening her husband and Mr. Waldo alighted in front of "The Eagle." As the former was giving orders about the horse to the attendant ostler, Woodbury came down the steps and immediately recognized the new arrivals.

"What!" he exclaimed, "is all Ptolemy coming to Tiberius to-day? Your wife has the start of you, Mr. Merryfield: I passed her this evening"——

A violent grasp on his arm interrupted him. "Where is she? Have they left?" the husband hoarsely asked.

The light from the corner-lamp fell full upon his face. Its expression of pain and anxiety was unmistakable, and a presentiment of the incredible truth shot through Woodbury's mind.

"Hush, my friend!" said Mr. Waldo. "Control yourself

On the other side of the lamp, with his back to her, sat a man, absorbed in a newspaper. A boy of ten years old lay asleep on the carpet. Noting all this at a glance, Woodbury knocked at the door. A rustling of the newspaper followed, footsteps entered the hall, and the outer door was opened.

Woodbury assumed a natural air of embarrassed disappointment. "I am afraid," said he, "that I have made a mistake. Does Mr. Israel Thompson live here?"

"Israel Thompson? I don't know any such person. There's James Thompson, lives further down the street, on the other side."

"Thank you. I will inquire of him. I am a stranger here," and he rejoined his friends. "Now," said he, "to save time, Mr. Waldo, you and I must visit the other hotels, dividing them between us. Mr. Merryfield had better not take any part in the search. Let him wait for us on the corner opposite 'The Eagle.' We can make our separate rounds in twenty minutes, and I am sure we shall have discovered them by that time."

An enumeration of the hotels was made, and the two gentlemen divided them in such a manner as to economize time in making their rounds. They then set out in different directions, leaving Merryfield to walk back alone to the rendezvous. Hitherto, the motion and excitement of the pursuit had kept him up, but now he began to feel exhausted and desponding. He had not eaten since noon, and experienced all the weakness without the sensation of hunger. A powerful desire for an artificial stimulant came over him, and, for a moment, he halted before the red light of a drinking-saloon, wondering whether there was any one inside who could recognize him. The door opened, and an atmosphere of rank smoke, tobacco-soaked sawdust, and pungent whiskey gushed out; oaths and fragments of obscene talk met his ears, and he hurried away in disgust. At "The Eagle" he fortified himself again with ice-water, and then took his stand on the opposite corner, screened from the lamp-light by an awning-post.

"I thank you for coming—you and Hannah, both," Merryfield sadly added, "but I'm afraid it's no use."

"Cheer up," said the clergyman, "Mr. Woodbury will be here in a moment."

"He is here already," said Woodbury, joining them at the instant. "I have"—He paused, recognizing the gig and its occupants, and looked inquiringly at Mr. Waldo.

"They know it," answered the latter, "and for that reason they have come."

"Brave women! We may need their help. I have found the persons we are looking for—at the Beaver House, in the second-story parlor, waiting for the midnight train."

"Then drive on, wife," said Mr. Waldo; "you can put up the horse there. You are known at the Eagle, and we had better avoid curiosity. Follow us: Mr. Woodbury will lead the way."

They passed up the street, attracting no notice, as the connection between the movements of the women in the gig, and the three men on the sidewalk, was not apparent. In a short time they reached the Beaver House, a second-rate hotel, with a deserted air, on a quiet street, and near the middle of the block. Two or three loafers were in the office, half sliding out of the short arm-chairs as they lounged, and lazily talking. Woodbury called the landlord to the door, gave the horse into his charge, and engaged a private room until midnight. There was one, he had already ascertained, adjoining the parlor on the second story. He offered liberal pay, provided no later visitors were thrust upon them, and the landlord was very willing to make the arrangement. It was not often that he received so much patronage in one evening.

After a hurried consultation, in whispers, they entered the house. The landlord preceded them up-stairs with a lamp, and ushered them into the appointed room. It was a small oblong chamber, the floor decorated with a coarse but very gaudy carpet, and the furniture covered with shiny hair-cloth, very cold, and stiff, and slippery. There was a circular table of mahogany, upon which lay a Bible, and the Odd-Fellow's

can't say it—but I couldn't hold up my head, as—as it were, and defend you by a single word."

"Oh, no! of course *you* couldn't!" Dyce broke in again, with an insufferable impudence. "*You* know, as well as I do, —or Mr. Waldo, for that matter,—what *men* are. Don't brag to me about your morality, and purity, and all that sort of humbug: what's fit for one sex is fit for the other. Men, *you* know, have a natural monopoly in the indulgence of passion: it's allowed to them, but woman is damned by the very suspicion. You know, both of you, that any man would as lief be thought wicked as chaste—that women are poor, ignorant fools"——

One of the folding-doors which communicated with the adjoining room was suddenly torn open, and Woodbury appeared. His brown eyes, flashing indignant fire, were fixed upon Dyce. The sallow face of the latter grew livid with mingled emotions of rage and fear. With three strides, Woodbury was before him.

"Stop!" he cried, "you have been allowed to say too much already. If *you*," he added, turning to the others, "have patience with this beast, I have not."

"Ah! he thinks he's among his Sepoys," Dyce began, but was arrested by a strong hand upon his collar. Woodbury's face was pale, but calm, and his lips parted in a smile, the expression of which struck terror to the heart of the medium.

"Now, leave!" said he, in a low, stern voice, "leave, or I hurl you through that window!" Relinquishing his grasp on the collar, he opened the door leading to the staircase, and waited. For a moment, the eyes of the two men met, and in that moment each took the measure of the other. Dyce's figure seemed to contract; his breast narrowed, his shoulders fell, and his knees approached each other. He walked slowly and awkwardly to the end of the sofa, picked up his valise, and shuffled out of the room without saying a word. Woodbury followed him to the door, and said, before he closed it:

"Recollect, *you* leave here by the midnight train." None

have all followed you, prompted only by the pity and distress which we feel for your sake and your husband's? We beg you not to leave us, your true friends, and go among strangers. Listen to us calmly, and if we convince you that you are mistaken, the admission should not be difficult."

"You, too, Hannah!" cried Mrs. Merryfield. "You, that taught me what my rights were! Will you confess, first, that *you* are mistaken?"

An expression of pain passed over Hannah Thurston's face. "I never meant to claim more than natural justice for woman," said she, "but I may have been unhappy in my advocacy of it. I may even," turning towards Mrs. Waldo, "have seemed to assume a hostile position towards man. If so, it was a mistake. If what I have said has prompted you to this step, I will take my share of humiliation. But we will not talk of that now. Blame me, Sarah, if you like, so you do not forget the tenderness you cannot wholly have lost, for him whose life is a part of yours, here and hereafter. Think of the children who are waiting for you in the other life—waiting for *both* parents, Sarah."

The stubborn resistance of the wife began to give way. Tears came to her eyes, and she shook as if a mighty struggle had commenced in her heart. "It was for them," she murmured, in a broken voice, "that I was going. He said they would be nearer to me."

"Can they be nearer to you when you are parted from their father? Was it only your heart that was wrung at their loss? If all other bonds were broken between you, the equal share in the beings of those Immortals should bind you in life and death! Pardon me for renewing your sorrow, but I must invoke the purer spirit that is born of trial. If your mutual watches over their cradles cannot bring back the memory of your married love, I must ask you to remember who held your hand beside their coffins, whose arm supported you in the lonely nights!"

The husband could endure no more. Lifting his face from

his hands, he cried: "It was me, Sarah. And now, if you leave me, there will be no one to talk with me about Absalom, and Angelina, and our dear little Robert. Don't you mind how I used to dance him on my knee, as—as it were, and tell him he should have a horse when he was big? He had such pretty hair; you always said he'd make a handsome man, Sarah: but now they're all gone. There's only us two, now, as it were, and we can't—no, we daren't part. We won't part, will we?"

Mrs. Waldo made a quiet sign, and they stole gently from the room. As he closed the door, Woodbury saw the conquered and penitent wife look up with streaming eyes, sobbing convulsively, and stretch out her arms. The next instant, Mrs. Waldo had half embraced him, in the rush of her pent-up gratitude.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, striving to subdue her voice, "how grand it was that you put down that—that *man*. I never believed in non-resistance, and now I know that I am right."

Hannah Thurston said nothing, but her face was radiant with a tranquil light. She could not allow the doubts which had arisen in her mind—the disturbing influences which had, of late, beset her, to cloud the happy ending of such a painful day. A whispered conversation was carried on between Woodbury and the Waldos, so as not to disturb the low voices in the next room; but at the end of ten minutes the door opened and Merryfield appeared.

"We will go home to-night, as it were," said he. "The moon rises about this time, and the night is warm."

"Then we will all go!" was Mrs. Waldo's decision. "The carriages will keep together—husband, you *must* drive one of them, alone—and I shall not be so much alarmed. It is better so: curious folks will not see that we have *been* absent, and need not know."

Woodbury whispered to her: "I shall wait *until* the train leaves."

"Will you follow, afterwards?"

"Yes—but no : my intention to stay all night is known, and I ought properly to remain, unless you need my escort."

"Stay," said Hannah Thurston.

The vehicles left the two hotels with the same persons who had arrived in them—Dyce excepted. Outside of Tiberius they halted, and Merryfield joined his wife. The two women followed, and Mr. Waldo, alone, acted as rear-guard. Thus, in the silent night, over the moonlit hills, and through the rustling darkness of the woods, they went homewards.

Vague suspicions of *something* haunted the community of Ptolemy for a while, but nothing was ever discovered or betrayed which could give them a definite form. And yet, of the five persons to whom the truth was known, three were women.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ONE OF THE SUMMER DIVERSIONS OF PTOLEMY.

TEN days after the journey to Tiberius, the highways in both valleys, and those descending from the hills on either side, were unusually thronged. Country carriages, buggies of all fashions, and light open carts, rapidly succeeded each other, all directing their course towards the village. They did not halt there, however, but passed through, and, climbing the gentle acclivity of the southern hill, halted at a grove, nearly a mile distant. Here the Annual Temperance Convention of Atauga County was to be held. The cause had been languishing for the past year or two; many young men had become careless of their pledges, and the local societies were beginning to fall to pieces, because the members had heard all that was to be said on the subject, and had done all that could conveniently be done. The plan of procuring State legislation in their favor rendered it necessary to rekindle, in some measure, the fires of zeal—if so warm an expression can be applied to so sober a cause—and one of the most prominent speakers on Temperance, Mr. Abiram Stokes, was called upon to brush up his well-used images and illustrations for a new campaign. It was announced, by means of large placards, posted in all the village stores, post-offices, and blacksmiths' shops, far and wide, that not only he, but Mr. Grindle and several other well-known speakers were to address the Convention. Strange as it may seem, the same placard was conspicuously displayed in the bar-room of the Ptolemy House, the landlord candidly declaring that he would be glad if such a convention

ceded them, with their usual independence, well knowing the impatience of the young men, and hoping that the most agreeable of the latter would discover them before the meeting was called to order. This was the real charm of the occasion, to old as well as young. The American needs a serious pretext for his recreation. He does not, in fact, recognize its necessity, and would have none at all, did not Nature, with benevolent cunning, occasionally furnish him with diversion under the disguise of duty.

As the banners of the local societies arrived, they were set up in conspicuous positions, on and around the speaker's platform. That of Tiberius was placed in the centre. It was of blue silk, with a gold fringe, and an immense geyser-like fountain in its field, under which were the words: "Ho! every one that thirsteth!" On the right was the banner of Ptolemy—a brilliant rainbow, on a white ground, with the warning: "Look not upon the Wine when it is Red." What connection there was between this sentence and the rainbow was not apparent, unless the latter was meant to represent a watery deluge. The banner of Anacreon, on the left, held forth a dancing female, in a crimson dress. One foot was thrown far out behind her, and she was violently pitching forward; yet, in this uncomfortable position, she succeeded in pouring a thick stream of water from a ewer of blue china into the open mouth of a fat child, who wore a very scanty dress. The inscription was: "The Fountain of Youth." The most ingenious device, however, was that from Nero Corners. This little community, too poor or too economical to own a temperance banner, took a political one, which they had used in the campaign of the previous year. Upon it were the names of the candidates for President and Vice-President: "PIERCE and KING." A very little alteration turned the word "Pierce" into "Prince," and the word "WATER" being prefixed, the inscription became: "Water,—Prince and King." Those from other neighborhoods, who were not in the secret, greatly admired the simplicity and force of the expression.

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Report was adopted with tremendous unanimity, and
 es of the members of the Committee beamed with sat-
 on. The political movement might be considered as
 fully inaugurated. This was the main object of the
 ntion, and the waiting orators now saw that they had a
 and pleasant field before them. Woodbury, who was
 g against a tree, near the end of a plank upon which his
 s the Waldos were seated, listened with an involuntary
 ion of pain and regret. The very character of the Report
 ghtened him in the conviction that the vice to be cured
 its origin in a radical defect of the national temperament,
 n no legislation could reach.

s. Waldo looked up at him, inquiringly. He shook his
 "It is a false movement," said he; "good works are
 accomplished by violence."

But sometimes by threatening it," she answered, with a
 ing smile.

e was about to reply, when the President announced that
 n Baxter, of the Anacreon Seminary, would recite a poem,
 which the meeting would be addressed by Mr. Abiram

es.
 Byron Baxter, who was an overgrown, knock-kneed youth
 nineteen, with long hair, parted in the middle, advanced to
 front of the platform, bowed, and then suddenly started
 k, with both hands extended before him, in an attitude of
 or. In a loud voice, he commenced to recite:

"Oh, take the maddening bowl away!
 Remove the poisonous cup!
 My soul is sick; its burning ray
 Hath drunk my spirit up.

"Take, take it from my loathing lip
 Ere madness fires my brain:
 Oh, take it hence, nor let me sip
 Its liquid death again!"

As the young man had evidently never tasted any thing

His peroration ran something in this wise : " This, the purest and most beneficent of the Virtues, comes not to achieve her victory in battles and convulsions. Soft as the dew, of heaven, her white feet are beautiful upon the mountains, ringing glad tidings of great joy ! Blessed are we that she has chosen her abode among us, and that she has selected us to do her work ! No other part of the world was fitted to receive her. She never could have been produced by the moulder- ing despotisms of Europe, where the instincts of Freedom are stifled by wine and debauchery ; the Old World is too benighted to behold her face. Here only—here on the virgin bosom of a new Continent—here, in the glorious effulgence of the setting sun here only could she be born ! She is the child of the West, Temperance—and before her face the demon of Alcohol to his caverns and hides himself among the bones of the living, while Peace sits at her right hand and Plenty at her left, through the shadows of the East." " Beautiful ! " " splendid ! " was whispered to Carrie and her friends as the speaker took his seat. Miss Caldwell wiped her eyes with a very small batiste handkerchief as she reflected that this man, her beau-ideal, never she understood to mean an ideal beau), would never have made her an appreciative helpmeet she would have made her a drunkard.

" Oh, Hannah ! " she whispered, leaning forward to hear any thing so beautiful ? " Thurston, who was seated on the next plank, " " I thought it fine, the first time I heard it, replied, with a lack of enthusiasm which quite astonished a little sempstress. She began to fear she had made a mistake when the sight of Miss Ruhaney Goodwin, equally (and no wonder, for her brother Elisha had been a drunkard), somewhat revived her confidence. " Flashy, but not bad of its kind, " said Wood- ply to Mrs. Waldo's question.

" Are you not ashamed ? " " It's magnificent. And a handsome man ! " she exclaimed. " But I see, terminated not to admire any of them ; you've no

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facts," said he, "how can any man, who is worthy the
of a human being, dare to oppose the doctrine of the
e? How dare any man suppose that his own miserable
al indulgences are of more consequence than the moral
ion of his fellow-creatures? Yet there are such men—
poor, ignorant, deluded creatures, who know no better,
are entitled to some allowances—but men who are rich,
appear to be educated, and who claim to be highly moral
respectable. What are we to think of those men?"

Waldo glanced up at Woodbury with a look which
said: "Now it's coming!"

"Let it come!" his look replied.

"They think, perhaps," the speaker continued, "that there
are different laws of morality for different climates—that the
can bring here among us the detestable practices of heat-
ices, which we are trying to root out! I tell you, such, they
better go back, and let their unhappy slaves sell such, they
hookah, filled with its intoxicating draught, in their hand, them
tottering steps when the fumes of sherbet have moun-
their brains!"

Many persons in the assembly knew who
as Woodbury's position made him easily distinguished, "that the
watched him with curiosity as the speaker proceeded—that the
leaned against the tree, with his arms folded, and the
half-smile on his face, until the foregoing climacteric, and
when, to the astonishment of the spectators, he proceeded
uncontrollable fit of laughter.

Mr. Grindle, too, had discovered his victim, and
darted a side look at him, calculating how far he
the attack with safety to himself. Woodbury
violent merriment encouraged while it disconcerted
was, at least, nothing to be feared, and he might
"Yes, I repeat it," he continued; "whatever
given to the beverage, we are not to be cheated
may drink their sherbet, or their Heidsick; they may
drinks by respectable names, and the demon of Alc-

as he claims them for his own. St. Paul says 'the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman:' beware, beware, my friends, lest the accursed poison, which is harmless to you under its *vulgar* names, should beguile you with an *aristocratic* title!"

"Will the speaker allow me to make a remark?"

Woodbury, controlling his laughter with some difficulty, straightened himself from his leaning position against the tree, and, yielding to the impulse of the moment, spoke. His voice, not loud, but very clear, was distinctly heard all over the crowd, and there was a general rustling sound, as hundreds of heads turned towards him. Mr. Grindle involuntarily paused in his speech, but made no reply.

"I will only interrupt the proceedings for a moment," Woodbury resumed, in a cool, steady tone, amidst the perfect silence of the multitude—"in order to make an explanation. I will not wrong the speaker by supposing that his words have a personal application to myself; because that would be charging him with advocating truth by means of falsehood, and defending morality by the weapons of ignorance and insult. But I know the lands of which he speaks and the habits of their people. So far from drunkenness being a 'detestable heathen habit' of theirs, it is really we who should go to them to learn temperance. I must confess, also, my great surprise at hearing the speaker's violent denunciation of the use of sherbet, after seeing that it is openly sold, to-day, in this grove—after having, with my own eyes, observed the speaker, himself, drink a large glass of it with evident satisfaction."

There was a sudden movement, mixed here and there with laughter, among the audience. Mr. Grindle cried out, in a hoarse, excited voice: "The charge is false! I never use intoxicating beverages!"

"I made no such charge," said Woodbury, calmly, "but it may interest the audience to know that sherbet is simply the Arabic name for lemonade."

The laughter was universal, Mr. Grindle *excepted*.

"The speaker, also," he continued, "*mentioned* the intoxi-

ating beverage of the hookah. As the hookah is a ~~which~~ a pipe which the smoke of the tobacco passes through water ~~reaching~~ water before reaching the mouth, it may be considered a less dan- ~~beverage~~ dangerous beverage than the clay-pipe of the Irish laborer. I be- ~~of the meeting~~ grieve for my interruption."

The laughter was renewed, more heartily than be- ~~for a minute~~ before, for a minute after Woodbury ceased the tumult was ~~that Mr. Grindle~~ so great that Mr. Grindle could not be heard. To add to the ~~the leader of the Ptolemy band,~~ confusion the leader of the Ptolemy band, taking the noise as ~~the Convention~~ a sign that the Convention had adjourned, struck up "Malbro- ~~air,~~ k," which air, unfortunately, was known in the neighborhood ~~classical title of~~ by the less classical title of "We won't go home till morning."

The other members of the Committee, on the pl- ~~ately begged~~ at form, privately begged Mr. Grindle to take his seat and allo- ~~introduce a new orator;~~ w them to introduce a new orator; but he persisted in speak- ~~ing for an-~~ ing for another quarter of an hour, to show that he was not discomfited. The greater portion of the audience, nevertheless, secretly re- ~~joiced at the lesson~~ joiced at the lesson he had received, and the remainder of his speech was not heard with much attention. Woodbury, to escape the curious gaze of the multitude, took a narrow and uncomfortable seat on the end of the plank, beside Mrs. Waldo. He was thenceforth, very much against his will, an ob- ~~ject of~~ ject of great respect to the rowdies of Ptolemy, who identified him with the opposite cause.

There was another song, commencing :

"The wine that all are praising
Is not the drink for me,
But there's a spring in yonder glen,
Whose waters flow for Temperance men," etc.,

which was likewise sung in chorus. Then succeeded other speakers, of less note, to a gradually diminishing circle of hear- ~~ers.~~ ers. The farmers and their wives strayed off to gossip with acquaintances on the edges of the grove; baskets of provisions were opened and the contents shared, and the stalls of cake and sarsaparilla suds experienced a reflux of custom. As the

young men were not Lord Byrons, the young ladies did not scruple to eat in their presence, and flirtations were carried on with a chicken-bone in one hand and a piece of bread in the other. The sun threw softer and slanter lights over the beautiful picture of the valley, and, gradually creeping below the boughs, shot into the faces of those who were still seated in front of the platform. It was time to close the performances of the day, and they were accordingly terminated with a third song, the refrain of which was :

"Oh, for the cause is rolling on, rolling on, rolling on,
Over the darkened land."

Woodbury and the Waldos, to avoid the dust of the road, walked back to Ptolemy by a pleasant path across the fields. Ere long they overtook Hannah Thurston and Miss Dilworth. Mr. Grindle was, of course, the theme of conversation.

"Wasn't he rightly served, Hannah?" Mrs. Waldo exclaimed, with enthusiasm. Woodbury was fast assuming heroic proportions, in her mind.

"I think Mr. Woodbury was entirely justifiable in his interruption," Miss Thurston answered, "and yet I almost wish that it had not occurred."

"So do I!" Woodbury exclaimed.

"Well—you two are queer people!" was Mrs. Waldo's amazed remark.

only ornament she wore was a cluster of little pink flowers in the latter. The excitement of the occasion, or the act of walking, had brought a soft tinge to her usually pale cheek, and as her eyes dropped to avoid the level light of the sun, Woodbury noticed how long and dark were the lashes that fringed her lids. "At eighteen she must have been lovely," he said to himself, "but, even then, her expression could scarcely have been more virginly pure and sweet, than now."

He turned away, repressing a sigh. How one delusion could spoil a noble woman!

Before descending the last slope to the village, they paused, involuntarily, to contemplate the evening landscape. The sun was just dipping behind the western hill, and a portion of Ptolemy lay in shadow, while the light, streaming through the gap made by a lateral glen, poured its dusty gold over the distant elms of Roaring Brook, and caused the mansion of Lakeside to sparkle like a star against its background of firs. Far down the lake flashed the sail of a pleasure-boat, and the sinking western shore melted into a vapory purple along the dim horizon. The strains of the band still reached them from the grove, but softened to the airy, fluctuating sweetness of an Æolian harp.

"Our lines are cast in pleasant places," said Mr. Waldo, looking from hill to hill with a cheerful content on his face.

"Every part of the earth has its moments of beauty, I think," Woodbury replied: "but Ptolemy is certainly a favored spot. If the people only knew it. I wonder whether happiness is not a faculty, or a peculiarity of temperament, quite independent of the conditions of one's life?"

"That depends on what you call happiness," Mrs. Waldo rejoined. "Come, now, let us each define it, and see how we shall agree. *My* idea is, it's, in making the best of every thing."

"No, it's finding a congenial spirit!" cried Miss Carrie.

"You forget the assurance of Grace," said the clergyman.

"Fairly caught, Mrs. Waldo! You are no better than I;

monize with my own. I am but one among many millions, and my aim is to understand Life, not forcibly change its character."

Walking a little in advance of the others, as they spoke, the conversation was interrupted by their arrival in Ptolemy. Woodbury declined an invitation to take tea with the Waldos, and drove home with Bute, in the splendor of sunset. The latter took advantage of the first opportunity to describe to Mrs. Fortitude Babb the confusion which his master had inflicted on Mr. Grindle.

"And sarved him right, too," said she, with a grim satisfaction. "To think o' *him* turnin' up his nose at *her* best Sherry, and callin' it pizon!"

She could not refrain from expressing her approbation to Woodbury, as she prepared his tea. Her manner, however, made it seem very much like a reproof. "I've heerd, Sir," she remarked, with a rigid face, "that you've been speakin'. I s'pose you'll be goin' to the Legislatur', next."

Woodbury smiled. "Ill news travels fast," he said.

"T'a'n't ill, as I can see. *She* wouldn't ha' thought so, nuther. Though, to be sure, sich fellers didn't come here, in *her* time."

"He will not come again, Mrs. Babb."

"I'd like to see him try it!" With which words Mrs. Babb slapped down the lid of the teapot, into which she had been looking, with a sound like the discharge of a pocket-pistol.

Woodbury went into the library, wheeled his arm-chair to the open window, lighted a cigar, and watched the risen moon brighten against the yielding twilight. The figure of Hannah Thurston, in her white dress, with the pearl-colored ribbon at her throat, with the long lashes falling over her dark-gray eyes, the flush on her cheek, and the earnest sweetness of her lips, rose before him through the rings of smoke, in the luminous dusk of the evening. A persistent fate seemed to throw them together, only to show him how near they might have been, how far apart they really were. When he recalled her cour-

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self-possession during the scene in the grove above the
 and the still greater courage which le- led her to Tiberius,
 approach in order to rescue a deluded creature from im-
 ruin, he confessed to himself that fo for no other living
 id he feel equal respect. He bowed down in rever
 re that highest purity which is unconconscious of wha
 es, and an anxious interest arose in his his heart as he re
 the dangers into which it might leas lead her. He fel
 was capable of understanding him ; th that she possessed
 instincts which constituted what was as best in his own
 that she yielded him, also, a certain in respect : but it
 ally evident that her mind was unnece cessarily alert and
 as in his presence. She assumed a constant attitude
 ce, when no attack was intended. He He seemed to ex-
 unconscious repellant force towards her, the secret of
 e suspected must be found in herself in the tenacity
 ich she held to her peculiar views, and d a feminine im-
 of contrary opinions.
 as he mused, his fancies still came back to that one pic-
 he pure Madonna face, with its downca t eyes, touched
 e mellow glory of the sunset. A noise less breath of
 at brought to his window the creamy or of the locust
 s, and lured forth the Persian dream of the roses.
 onlight silver on the leaves—the pear y obscurity of
 —the uncertain murmurs of the air— bined to steep
 ses in a sweet, semi-voluptuous trance. He was too
 and completely man not to know what as lacking to
 . He was accustomed to control passion because he
 rned its symptoms, but this return of the ver of youth
 w welcome, with all its pain.
 ards midnight, he started suddenly and clos sed the win
 “My God!” he exclaimed, aloud ; “she in my arms
 s on mine! What was I thinking of? Pshaw—a strong
 l woman! Well—the very strongest-minde d of the
 ill very far from being a man.” With which h consol
 for the absurdity of his thoughts, he went to bed.

The next morning he spent an hour in a careful inspection of the library, and, after hesitating between a ponderous translation of the "*Maha-bharata*" and Lane's "Arabian Nights," finally replaced them both, and took down Jean Paul's "Siebenkäs" and "Walt and Vult." After the early Sunday dinner, he put the volumes into his pockets, and, mounting his horse, rode to Ptolemy.

Hannah Thurston had brought a chair into the open air, and seated herself on the shady side of the cottage. The afternoon was semi-clouded and mildly breezy, and she evidently found the shifting play of sun and shade upon the eastern hill better reading than the book in her hand, for the latter was closed. She recognized Woodbury as he came into the street a little distance below, and watched the motion of his horse's legs under the boughs of the balsam-firs, which hid the rider from sight. To her surprise, the horse stopped, opposite the cottage-door: she rose, laid down her book, and went forward to meet her visitor, who, by this time, had entered the gate.

After a frank and unembarrassed greeting, she said: "My mother is asleep, and her health is so frail that I am very careful not to disturb her rest. Will you take a seat, here, in the shade?"

She then withdrew for a moment, in order to bring a second chair. In the mean time, Woodbury had picked up her book: it was Bettine's Correspondence with G nderode. "I am glad," said he, looking up at her approach, "that I was not wrong in my selection."

She answered his look with an expression of surprise.

"I am going away, in a few days, for a summer excursion," he added, by way of explanation, taking the books from his pockets, "and in looking over my library this morning I found two works, which, it occurred to me, you might like to read. The sight of this volume convinces me that I have judged correctly: they are also translations from the German."

Hannah Thurston's eyes brightened as she took the books, and looked at their title-pages. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "I

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you very much! I have long wished to see these
Maria Child speaks very highly of them."

Who is Lydia Maria Child?"

He looked at him, almost in dismay. "Have

you 'Letters from New York?'" she asked.

"Are you a subscriber to the *Slavery Annals*?"

"No," she edits, but these letters have been collected

"Are they doctrinal?"

"Perhaps you would call them so. She has a general

view with all Progress; yet her letters are mostly de-

signed to offer them to you, if I were sure that you would

accept willingly—not as a task thrust upon you."

"You would oblige me," said Woodbury, cordially

but unwilling to hear new views, especially when they

were presented. Anna Maria Child, I present

the state of Woman's Rights?"

"You will, at least, find very little of such advan-

ces."

"And if I should?" he asked. "Do not confound

me with the multitude who stand in hostile

to your theory. I am very willing that it should be

discussed, because attention may thereby be drawn to

these things. Besides, in the long run, the practice of

what is sensible and just, and nothing can be

maintained which is not very near the truth."

"Real wrongs!" she repeated; "yes, I suppose

generally considered imaginary. It is a common

supposition of them."

"Is that charge entirely fair?"

"He colored slightly. Is the man's nature fin-

ely sensitive, that his mind is so equably clear and

calm, that antagonism rouse him into warmth, imparting

warmth to her thoughts, which his unimpassioned

reason led to death? Then she remembered his

conduct during the walk to Ptolemy, his terrible in-

jury at Tiberius, and felt that she had done him

se works:

you never
"I do not

Annihilator

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wrong.

"I ask your pardon," she answered, presently. "I did not mean to apply the charge to you, Mr. Woodbury. I was thinking of the prejudices we are obliged to encounter. We present what we feel to be serious truths in relation to our sex, and they are thrown aside with a contemptuous indifference, which wounds us more than the harshest opposition, because it implies a disbelief in our capacity to think for ourselves. You must know that the word 'feminine,' applied to a man, is the greatest reproach—that the phrase 'a woman's idea' is never uttered but as a condemnation."

"I have not looked at the subject from your point of view," said Woodbury, with an expressed respect in his manner, "but I am willing to believe that you have reason to feel aggrieved. You must remember, however, that the reproach is not all on one side. You women are just as ready to condemn masculine habits and ideas in your own sex. Among children a molly-coddle is no worse than a tomboy. The fact, after all, does not originate in any natural hostility or contempt, on either side, but simply from an instinctive knowledge of the distinctions of sex, in temperament, in habits, and in mind."

"In mind?" Hannah Thurston asked, with unusual calmness. "Then you think that minds, too, are male and female?"

"That there are general distinctions, certainly. The exact boundaries between them, however, are not so easily to be defined. But there is a radical difference in the texture, and hence in the action of the two. Do you not always instinctively feel, in reading a book, whether the author is a man or a woman? Can you name any important work which might have been written, indifferently, by either?"

Miss Thurston reflected a while, and then suggested: "Mrs. Somerville's 'Physical Geography?'"

"Fairly answered," said Woodbury, smiling. "I will not reject the instance. I will even admit that a woman might write a treatise on algebraic equations, in which there should be no sign of her sex. Still, this would not affect the main

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h I think you will recognize upon reflecti
ness of the immortal women of History.
at men are not only willing, without th
y, to acknowledge genius in Woman, b
to recognize and respect it. What fe
or her subject that 'whitest lily on
the Maid of Orleans? But Schiller an
tten her. How rare it is, to see one o
ologized by a woman! The princip
se—what is her name?—Bessie Str
ith more fairness and consideration
her own sex who are opposed to her v
that is it," she answered, sadly; "we
and fear to offend them."

much, at least, seems to be true," said he
e on the one hand and protection on the
rmer and tenderer form of union than
nly balanced. It is not a question o
dical and necessary difference of natu
ely organized for the hard, coarse bu
d it is for her own sake that man desir
He stands between her and human :

ould she not refine it by her presence?"
r—never!" exclaimed Woodbury. "
would drag her down to unutterable
ad the right of suffrage there would be
e rowdies at the polls, the first time th
d of five years both sexes would sw
—he added, seeing the shocked expressio
's face,—“supposing them to be equally
ent machinery of politics. The first ti
e went into a bar-room to canvass for vote
imates on their best behavior; but this co
e would soon either be driven from th
down to the same level. Nay, she woul

*on. I admit
Nay, more:
e least touch
ut are always
male poet has
the shield of
Southey have
f these famous
l advocate of
ker, would be
y men than by
ews."*

*are dependent
e, "that a sense
he other consti-
if the natures
of superiority,
ature. Woman
business of the
ires to save her
nature in the*

*?"
"On the con-
e depths. If
less swearing
ey voted, but
ear together.
on of Hannal
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me a female
es, she would
ould not last
the field, on
ld go below*

it, for the rudest woman would be injured by associations through which the most refined man might pass unharmed."

The tone of grave conviction in his words produced a strong though painful impression upon his hearer. She had heard very nearly the same things said, in debate, but they were always met and apparently overcome by the millennial assurances of her friends—by their firm belief in the possible perfection of human nature, an illusion which she was too ready to accept. A share in all the special avocations of Man, she had believed, would result in *his* elevation, not in the debasement of Woman.

"I should not expect a sudden change," she said, at last, "but might not men be gradually redeemed from their low tastes and habits? Might not each sex learn from the other only what is best and noblest in it? It would be very sad if all hope for the future must be taken away from us."

"All hope? No!" said Woodbury, rising from his seat. "The human race is improving, and will continue to improve. Better hope too much than not at all. But between the natures of the sexes there is a gulf as wide as all time. The laws by which each is governed are not altogether arbitrary; they have grown, age after age, out of that difference in mental and moral development of which I spoke, and which—pardon me—you seem to overlook. Whatever is, is not always right, but you may be sure there is no permanent and universal relation founded on error. You would banish profanity, excesses, brute force from among men, would you not? Have you ever reflected that these things are distorted forms of that energy which has conquered the world? Mountains are not torn down, rivers bridged, wildernesses subdued, cities built, states founded, and eternal dikes raised against barbarism, by the eaters of vegetables and the drinkers of water! Every man who is worth the name possesses something of the coarse, original fibre of the race: he lacks, by a wise provision of Providence, that finer protecting instinct which holds woman back from the rude, material aspects of human nature. He knows and

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as inevitable facts, many things, of which she does suspect the existence. Therefore, Miss Thurston, apply to men the aspirations of progress which you and as a woman, you must expect to be disappointed. For speaking so plainly, in opposition to views now you must cherish with some tenderness. I least, not been guilty of the offence which you on my sex."

He answered, "you have been frank, Mr. Wood. I know that you are sincere. But you may not your will somewhat colored by the old prejudice?" She had endeavored, the moment after she spoke, to moderate her expressions, yet her words sounded offensive.

Godbury smiled as he answered: "If it be so, why prejudices be worse than new ones? A prejudice take two years that shoots up over night. It don't take two years like this foxglove." "If it be so, why take two years stuck it in the" "said he. thanks for the de of the fir she "He will prob- "I shall stay at

What slowly matures, and lasts long," Thurston repeated some words of the. He gave her his hand. From the shade of the mountain mount and ride into the village. "I shall stay at sea with the Waldos," she thought: "I shall stay at

He turned her seat, mechanically taking up the volumes, but did not open them. His words still lingered, with a strange, disturbing effect. She felt that and an influence over her which she was not able to analyze. The calmness of his utterance, the ripeness, the patient, attracted opinions, the fairness of his judgment, al respect: yet new no man who compelled an equal en them. She ed to be very little in common between them. Shelf being awa ch lasted long after his departure. She e determined

which she de-
 miss Thurst-
 ess which
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 tion to view
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 e which
 Mr. We-
 may not
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 A preja-
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again and again, to avoid these mental encounters, but so secret force irresistibly led her to speak. She felt, in her most soul, the first lifting of a current, which, if it rose, would carry her, she knew not where. A weird, dangerous power in his nature seemed to strike at the very props on which life rested. With a sensation, almost of despair, she whispered to herself: "I will see him no more."

Woodbury, riding down the street, shook his head, and thought, as he unnecessarily pricked his horse with the spurs, "I fear she is incorrigible."

what he knew must be true. It was better, he said to himself, that he should cease, for a while, to speculate on the subject; but his thoughts continually returned to it in spite of himself. He greatly felt the need of help in this extremity, yet an unconquerable shyness prevented him from applying to either of the two persons—Woodbury or Mr. Waldo—who were capable of giving it. Towards his wife he was entirely kind and considerate. After the first day or two, the subject of the journey to Tiberius was tacitly dropped, and even the question of Woman's Rights was avoided as much as possible.

While he read aloud the "*Annihilator*" in the evening, and Mrs. Merryfield knit or sewed as she listened, the servant-girl and the field-hand exchanged their opinions in the kitchen. They had detected, the first day, the change in the demeanor of the husband and wife. "They've been havin' a row, and no mistake," said Henry, "and I guess he's got the best of it."

"No sich a thing," replied Ann, indignantly. "Him, indeed! It's as plain as my hand that he's awfully cut up, and she's took pity on him."

"Why, she's as cowed as can be!"

"And he's like a dog with his tail between his legs."

There was a half-earnest courtship going on between the two, and each, of course, was interested in maintaining the honor of the sex. It was a prolonged battle, renewed from day to day with re-enforcements drawn from observations made at meal-times, or in the field or kitchen. Most persons who attempt to conceal any strong emotion are like ostriches with their heads in the sand: the dullest and stupidest of mankind will feel, if not see, that something is the matter. If, to a man who knows the world, the most finished result of hypocrisy often fails of its effect, the natural insight of those who do not think at all is scarcely less sure and true. The highest art that ever a Jesuit attained could not blind a ship's crew or a company of soldiers.

It was fortunate for the Merryfields, that, while their dependents felt the charge, the truth was beyond their suspicions.

ds the few who knew it, there was of course
guise, and hence, after a solitude of ten day
Mr. Merryfield experienced a sense of relief
s, gleaning the scattered wheat with a hay-ra
ing the road, he perceived Hannah Thurston
om Ptolemy. Hitching his horse to the fence,
to the road to meet her. It was a warm aft
s in his shirt-sleeves, with unbuttoned wais
country, conventionalities have not reached t
liculous, and neither he nor his visitor was a
impropriety. The farmers, in fact, would ra
own brawny arms and bare breasts than see t
ir daughters exposed to the public gaze by a f
ress.

m glad you've come, Hannah," said he, as he
rd hand. "It seems a long time since I seen
e been quite alone ever since then."

should have come to see you sooner, but for m
she replied. "I hope you are both well and
: look asked more than her words.

es," said he, understanding the question in I
h's got over her delusion, I guess. Not a H
assed between us. We don't talk of it any m
ah, I'm in trouble about the principle of the
make it square in my mind, as it were. Ther
contradiction, somewhere, between principles
em out. You've thought more about the ma
can you make things straight?"

e struggle in Hannah Thurston's own mind e
mprehend his incoherent questions. She sca
o answer him, yet would fain say somethin
omfort him in his perplexity. After a pau
ed:

fear, James, that I have over-estimated my o
t we have all been too hasty in drawing conc
act reasoning. We have, perhaps, been pres

taking it for granted that we, alone, possessed a truth which the world at large is too blind to see—or, admitting that a true which we believe, that we are too hasty in endeavoring to fulfil it in our lives, before the needful preparation is made. You know that the field must be properly ploughed and sown, before you sow the grain. It may be that we are as impatient as to commence sowing before we have ploughed.

This illustration, drawn from his own business, gave Mr. Field great comfort. "That must be it!" he exclaimed. "I don't quite understand how, but I feel that what you say must be true, nevertheless."

"Then," she continued, encouraged by the effect of her words; "I have sometimes thought that we may be too slow in applying what we know to be absolute, eternal truths, to life which is finite, probationary, and liable to be affected by a thousand influences over which we have no control. For instance, you may analyze your soil, and the stimulants which apply to it—measure your grain, and estimate the exact quantity you ought to receive—but you cannot measure the heat, the moisture, the wind and hail, and the destructive insects which the summer may bring; and, therefore, you who sow according to agricultural laws may lose your crop, while another who disregards them, shall reap an abundant harvest. The truth of the laws you observed remains the same."

"What would you do, then, to be sure that you are right?" the farmer asked, as he opened the gate leading into his field.

"To continue the comparison, I should say, act as a prudent husbandman. Believe in the laws which govern the growth and increase of the seed, yet regulate your tillage according to the season. The crop is the main thing, and, though it sounds like heresy, the farmer may be right who prefers a good harvest secured in defiance of rules to a scanty one in the observance of them. But I had better drop the figure before I make a blunder."

"Not a bit of it!" he cried. "You've cheered me mightily. There's sense in what you say; queer that it is."

sible. Hannah Thurston detected the under-current of her thought, and strove to avoid an encounter with it.

"Yes," said she; "I suspect there are few persons of average ambition who find a sphere broad enough to content them. But our merits, you know, are not measured by that. You may be able to accomplish more good, here, in your quiet circle of neighbors, than in some more conspicuous place."

"I should be the judge of that," rejoined Mrs. Merryfield, tartly. Then, feeling that she had been a little too quick, she added, with mournful meekness: "But I suppose some lights are meant to be hid, otherways there wouldn't be bushels."

As she spoke, a light which did not mean to be hid, whatever the accumulation of bushels, approached from the lane. It was Seth Wattles, gracefully attired in a baggy blouse of gray linen, over which, in front, hung the ends of a huge purple silk cravat. He carried a roll of paper in one hand, and his head was elevated with a sense of more than usual importance. The expression of his shapeless mouth became almost triumphant as he perceived Hannah Thurston. She returned his greeting with a calmness and self-possession which he mistook for a returning interest in himself.

By the time the usual common-places had been exchanged, Merryfield had returned to the house. Seth, therefore, hastened to communicate the nature of his errand. "I have been working out an idea," said he, "which, I think, meets the wants of the world. It can be improved, no doubt,—I don't say that it's perfect—but the fundamental basis is right, I'm sure."

"What is it?" asked Merryfield, not very eagerly.

"A Plan for the Reorganization of Society, by which we can lighten the burden of labor, and avoid the necessity of Governments, with all their abuses. It is something like Fourier's plan of Phalansteries, only that don't seem adapted to this country. And it's too great a change, all at once. My plan can be applied immediately, because it begins on a smaller scale. I'm sure it will work, if I can only get it started. A dozen persons are enough to begin with."

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wife had heard him utter for years. He jumped
 as he spoke, and strode up and down the portico.
 ston, in spite of a temporary shock at the unex-
 pected, felt that her respect for James Merryfield
 was a slight increase. She was a little surprised at
 it should be so. As for Seth Watbittles, he was
 taken aback. He had surmised that his plan might
 meet technical objections, but he was certain that
 received with sympathy, and that he should finally
 farmer to accept it. Had the latter offered him
 whiskey, or drawn a bowie-knife from his sleeve, he
 would have been more astounded. He saw that, with open
 staring eyes, not knowing what to say.
 re, Seth," said Merryfield, pausing in his walk;
 "nor me a'n't a-going to reform the world. A
 things a'n't right, I know, and as far as talking
 speak our mind about 'em. But when it comes
 m yourself, I reckon you want a little longer ap-
 first. I sha'n't try it at my age. Make as pretty
 as you like, on paper, but don't think you'll set it
 se. There's no inside works to it, and it won't go
 why," Seth stammered, "I always thought y
 r of Social Reform." — it's to be d
 n—but I want, first, to see how it isanner are mar
 what to do. Neither you nor Tannore with you
 risk to run. Take a couple more g, sweeping
 sehould : do your cooking, washing, ther six m
 by turns, and if you hold together in your pla
 re satisfied, I'll have some faith in our Comm
 t Mrs. Whitlow to be one of your won't be
 Merryfield, "or the experiment wo Mary W
 her take care of your dairy, and Maarden. S
 Phillis Wheatley tend to your garden. See how
 you're ready, and I'll come and see b
 need to work, as it is, more than's health.

her husband continued, "and I don't want Sarah to, neither. I can manage my farm without any trouble, and I've no notion of taking ten green hands to bother me, and then have to divide my profits with them. Show me a plan that'll give me something more than I have, instead of taking away the most of it."

"Why, the society, the intellectual cultivation," Seth remarked, but in a hopeless voice.

"I don't know as I've much to learn from either you or Tanner. As for Whitlows, all I can say is, I've tried 'em. But what do you think of it, Hannah?"

"Very much as you do. I, for one, am certainly not ready to try any such experiment," Miss Thurston replied. "I still think that the family relation is natural, true, and necessary, yet I do not wonder that those who have never known it should desire something better than the life of a boarding-house. I know what that is."

"Seth," said Merryfield, recovering from his excitement, which he now saw, was quite incomprehensible to the disappointed tailor, "there's one conclusion I've come to, and I'd advise you to turn it over in your own mind. You and me may be right in our ideas of what's wrong and what ought to be changed, but we're not the men to set things right. I'm not Garrison, nor yet Wendell Phillips, nor you a— what's his name?—that Frenchman?—oh, Furrier, and neither of *them's* done any thing yet but talk and write. We're only firemen on the train, as it were, and if we try to drive the engine, we may just run every thing to smash."

The trying experience through which Merryfield had passed, was not without its good results. There was a shade more of firmness in his manner, of directness in his speech. The mere *sentiment* of the reform, which had always hung about him awkwardly, and sometimes even ludicrously, seemed to have quite disappeared; and though his views had not changed—at least, not consciously so—they passed through a layer of re-awakened practical sense somewhere between the organs of

thought and speech, and thus assumed a different coloring. He was evidently recovering from that very prevalent disorder—an actual paralysis of the reasoning faculties, which the victim persists in considering as their highest state of activity.

Seth had no spirit to press any further advocacy of his sublime scheme. He merely heaved a sigh of coarse texture, and remarked, in a desponding tone: "There's not much satisfaction in seeing the Right, unless you can help to fulfil it. I may not have more than one talent, but I did not expect you to offer me a napkin to tie it up in."

This was the best thing Seth ever said. It surprised himself, and he repeated it so often afterwards, that the figure became as inevitable a part of his speeches, as the famous two horsemen, in a certain author's novels.

Merryfield, seeing how completely he was vanquished, became the kind host again and invited him to stay for tea. Then, harnessing one of his farm-horses, he drove into Ptolemy for his semi-weekly mail, taking Hannah Thurston with him. As they were about leaving, Mrs. Merryfield suddenly appeared at the gate, with a huge bunch of her garden flowers, and a basket of raspberries, for the Widow Thurston. She was, in reality, very grateful for the visit. It had dissipated a secret anxiety which had begun to trouble her during the previous two or three days.

"Who knows"—she said to herself, sitting on the portico in the twilight, while a breeze from the lake shook the woodbines on the lattice, and bathed her in their soothing balm—"who knows but there are Mrs. Whitlows, or worse, *there*, too!"

CHAPTER XXI.

WITH AN ENTIRE CHANGE OF SCENE.

AFTER leaving Lakeside, Maxwell Woodbury first directed his course to Niagara, to refresh himself with its inexhaustible beauty, before proceeding to the great lakes of the North-west. His intention was, to spend six or eight weeks amid the bracing atmosphere and inspiring scenery of the Northern frontier, both as a necessary change from his quiet life on the farm, and in order to avoid the occasional intense heat of the Atauga Valley. From Niagara he proceeded to Detroit and Mackinaw, where, enchanted by the bold shores, the wild woods, and the marvellous crystal of the water, he remained for ten days. A change of the weather to rain and cold obliged him to turn his back on the attractions of Lake Superior and retrace his steps to Niagara. Thence, loitering down the northern shore of Ontario, shooting the rapids of the Thousand Isles, or delaying at the picturesque French settlements on the Lower St. Lawrence, he reached Quebec in time to take one of the steamboats to the Saguenay.

At first, the superb panorama over which the queenly city is enthroned—the broad, undulating shores, dotted with the cottages of the *habitans*—the green and golden fields of the Isle d'Orleans, basking in the sun—the tremulous silver veil of the cataract of Montmorency, fluttering down the dark rocks, and the blue ranges of the distant Laurentian mountains—absorbed all the new keenness of his faculties. Standing on the prow of the hurricane-deck, he inhaled the life of a breeze at once resinous from interminable forests of larch and fir, and sharp

desiring to love, but whose individuality somewhat interests me. A woman's ideal of man, I am afraid, rises in proportion to her intellectual culture. From the same cause, she is not so dependent on her emotions, and therefore more calculating and exacting. Is it not so?"

"No, it is not so!" replied Mrs. Blake, with energy. "Recollect, we are not speaking of the sham women."

"She does not belong to that class," said Woodbury. "She is, in many respects, a rare and noble character; she possesses natural qualities of mind which place her far above the average of women; she is pure as a saint, bold and brave, and yet thoroughly feminine in all respects save one—but that one exceptional feature neutralizes all the others."

"What is it?"

"She is strong-minded."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Blake, "do you mean a second Bessie Stryker?"

"Something of the kind—so far as I know. She is one of the two or three really intelligent women in Ptolemy—but with the most singularly exaggerated sense of duty. Some persons would have censured me more considerably for forgery or murder than she did for smoking a cigar. I discussed the subject of Women's Rights with her, the last thing before leaving home, and found her as intolerant as the rankest Conservative. What a life such a woman would lead one! Yet, I confess she provokes me, because, but for that one fault, she would be worth winning. It is vexatious to see a fine creature so spoiled."

"With all her fanaticism, she seems to have made a strong impression on you."

"Yes, I do not deny it," Woodbury candidly replied. "How could it be otherwise? In the first place, she is still something of a phenomenon to me, and therefore stimulates my curiosity. Secondly, she is far above all the other girls of Ptolemy, both in intellect and in natural refinement. She makes the others so tame that, while I could not possibly love

her, she prevents me from loving any of them. What am I to do?"

"A difficult case, upon my word. If I knew the characters, I might assist you to a solution. The only random suggestion I can make is this: if the strong-minded woman should come to love you, in spite of her strength, it will make short work of her theories of women's rights. Our instincts are stronger than our ideas, and the brains of some of us run wild only because our hearts are unsatisfied. I should probably have been making speeches through the country, in a Bloomer dress, by this time, if I had not met with my good Andrew. You need not laugh: I am quite serious. And I can give you one drop of comfort, before you leave the confessional: I see that your feelings are fresh and healthy, without a shade of cynicism: as we say in the West, the latch-string of your heart has not been pulled in, and I predict that somebody will yet open the door. Good-night!"

Giving his hand a hearty, honest pressure of sympathy, Mrs. Blake went to her state-room. Woodbury leaned over the stern-railing, and gazed upon the sprinkles of reflected starlight in the bosom of the St. Lawrence. The waves lapped on the stones of the wharf with a low, liquid murmur, and a boatman, floating upwards with the tide, sang at a distance: "*Jamais je ne t'oublierai.*" Woodbury mechanically caught the melody and sang the words after him, till boat and voice faded together out of sight and hearing. It refreshed rather than disturbed him that the eye of a true woman had looked upon his heart. "Whatever may be the end," he said to himself, "she shall know the whole truth, one day. When we suspect that a seed of passion may have been dropped in our natures, we must quietly wait until we feel that it has put forth roots. I did not tell her the whole truth. I am not sure but that I may love that girl, with all her mistaken views. Her face follows me, and calls me back. If each of us could but find the other's real self, then—why, then—"
 He did not follow the thought further. The old pang arose,

the old hunger of the heart came over him, and brought with it those sacred yearnings for the tenderer ties which follow marriage, and which man, scarcely less than woman, craves. The red lights of two cigars came down the long pier, side by side: it was the Georgians, returning from a visit to the village. The New Hampshire Professor approached him, and politely remarked: "It is singular that the Old Red Sandstone reappears in this locality."

"Very singular," answered Woodbury. "Good-night, Sir!" and went to bed.

The next morning the steamer crossed to Tadoussac, and entered the pitch-brown waters of the savage, the sublime, the mysterious Saguenay. The wonderful scenery of this river, or rather fiord, made the deepest impression on the new-made friends. It completely banished from their minds the conversation of the previous evening. Who could speak or even think of love, or the tender sorrow that accompanies the memory of betrayed hopes, in the presence of this stern and tremendous reality. Out of water which seemed thick and sullen as the stagnant Styx, but broke into a myriad beads of dusky amber behind the steamer's paddles, leaped now and then a white porpoise, weird and solitary as the ghost of a murdered fish. On either side rose the headlands of naked granite, walls a thousand feet in height, cold, inaccessible, terrible; and even where, split apart by some fore-world convulsion, they revealed glimpses up into the wilderness behind, no cheating vapor, no haze of dreams, softened the distant picture, but the gloomy green of the fir-forests darkened into indigo blue, and stood hard and cold against the gray sky. After leaving L'Anse à l'Eau, all signs of human life ceased. No boat floated on the black glass; no fisher's hut crouched in the sheltered coves; no settler's axe had cut away a single feather from the ragged plumage of the hills.

But as they reached the awful cliffs of Trinity and Eternity, rising straight as plummet falls from their bases, a thousand feet below the surface, to their crests, fifteen hundred feet in

the air, a wind blew out of the north, tearing ^{and rolling} away the gray covering of the sky, and allowing sudden ^{en floods} of sunshine to rush down through the blue gaps. The hearts of the travellers were lifted, as by the sound of trumpets. Far back from between the two colossal portals of rock, like the double propylæ of some Theban temple, ran a long, deep gorge of the wilderness, down which the coming sunshine rolled like a dazzling inundation, drowning the forests in splendor, pouring in silent cataracts over the granite walls, and painting the black bosom of the Saguenay with the blue of heaven. It was a sudden opening of the Gates of the North, and a greeting from the strong Genius who sat enthroned beyond the hills,—not in slumber and dreams, like his languid sister of the South, cooling her dusky nakedness in the deepest shade, but with the sun smiting his unflinching eyes, with his broad, hairy breast open to the wind, with the best blood of the world beating loud and strong in his heart, and the seed of empires in his virile loins!

Woodbury was not one of your “gushing” characters, who cry out “Splendid!” “Glorious!” on the slightest provocation. When most deeply moved by the grander aspects of Nature, he rarely spoke; but he had an involuntary habit of singing softly to himself, at such times. So he did now, quite unconsciously, and had got as far as :

“Thy heart is in the upper world,
And where the chamois bound;
Thy heart is where the mountain fir
Shakes to the torrent’s sound;”

—when he suddenly checked himself and turned away with a laugh and a light blush of self-embarrassment. He had been picturing to himself the intense delight which Hannah Thurston would have felt in the scene before him.

Meanwhile the boat sped on, and soon reached the end of the voyage at Ha-ha Bay. Mrs. Blake and her children were delighted with their journey, to which the meeting with

Woodbury had given such an additional charm. As they ascended the Saguenay in the afternoon, their eyes grew accustomed to the vast scale of the scenery; loftier and grander arose the walls of granite, and more wild and awful yawned the gorges behind them. The St. Lawrence now opened in front with the freedom of the sea, and in the crimson light of a superb sunset they returned to Rivière du Loup.

The companionship was not dropped after they had reached Quebec. Woodbury accompanied them to the Falls of the Montmorency and the Chaudière; to the Plains of Abraham and the quaint French villages on the shores; and their evenings were invariably spent on Durham Terrace, to enjoy, over and over again, the matchless view. It was arranged that they should return to Saratoga together, by way of Champlain and Lake George; and a few more days found them there, awaiting the arrival of Mr. Blake.

He came at last; and his wife had not incorrectly judged, in supposing that there were some points of mutual attraction between the two men. The Western merchant, though a shrewd and prudent man of business, was well educated, had a natural taste for art (he had just purchased two pictures by Church and Kensett), and was familiar with the literature of the day. He was one of those fortunate men who are capable of heartily enjoying such things, without the slightest ambition to produce them. He neither complained of his own vocation, nor did he lightly esteem it. He was not made for idle indulgence, and was sufficiently prosperous to allow himself proper recreation. His temperament, therefore, was healthy, cheerful, and stimulating to those with whom he came in contact. He was by no means handsome, and had a short, abrupt manner of speaking, which Woodbury's repose of manner threw into greater distinctness. His wife, however, knew his true value, as he knew hers, and their mutual confidence was absolute.

Woodbury strongly urged them to spend a few days with him at Lakeside, on their return journey to St. Louis. In ad-

dition to the pleasure he derived from their society, he had a secret desire that Mrs. Blake should see Hannah Thurston—a curiosity to know the impression which the two women would make on each other. What deeper motive lurked behind this, he did not question.

The discussion of the proposal reminded him that he had not heard from Lakeside since his departure. He immediately wrote to Arbutus Wilson, announcing his speedy return, and asking for news of the farming operations. Six days afterwards an answer came, not from Arbutus, but from Mr. Waldo—an answer of a nature so unexpected, that he left Saratoga the same night.

man -

CHAPTER XXII.

IN WHICH TROUBLE COMES TO LAKESIDE.

AFTER Woodbury had left Lakeside for his summer tour, Mrs. Fortitude Babb resumed her ancient authority. "Now," she said to Bute, as they sat down to supper on the day of his departure, "now we'll have a quiet time of it. A body'll know what to do without waitin' to be told whether it's jist to other people's likin's."

"Why, Mother Forty," said Bute, "Mr. Max. is as quiet a man as you'll find anywhere."

"Much you know about him, Bute. He lets you go on farmin' in y'r own way, pretty much; but look at my gard'n—tore all to pieces! The curran' bushes away at t'other end—half a mile off, if you want to git a few pies—and the kersanthums stuck into the yard in big bunches, among the grass! What would *she* say, if she could see it? And the little room for bed-clo'es, all cleaned out, and a big bathin' tub in the corner, and to be filled up every night. Thank the Lord, he can't find nothin' to say ag'in my cookin'. If he was to come pokin' his nose into the kitchen every day, I dunno *what* I'd do!"

"It's his own garden," said Bute, sturdily. "He's paid for it, and he's got a right to do what he pleases with it. *I* would, if 't'was mine."

"Oh yes, *you*! You're gittin' mighty independent, seems to me. I 'xpect nothin' else but you'll go off some day with that reedic'ulous thing with the curls."

"Mother Forty!" said Bute, rising suddenly from the

her name ag'in. I don't want to hear of her!" use with a fiery face.

little by little, however, ough her stiff brain: she d nodded her head. Th

on Bute's account, wa eling toward Miss Carr n inconsistency, she as

by turning up her nos utus—the very pick o e, Fortitude Babb, sa

well-built and sound, y liked him; there the chance of havin

good enough for hussy! That com

butus mustn't mind as ketched, and b he should marry so

ight him up yours elp, when you can r wits to work to

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Where was the co and, most important aculties? "I'll find

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Mrs. Babb

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Lakeside was lonely and uncomfortable without the presence of Mr. Woodbury.

As for Bute, though he felt that he was irritable and heavy, compared with his usual cheerful mood, there was more the matter with him than he supposed. The experience through which he had passed disturbed the quiet course of his blood. Like a mechanism, the action of which is even and perfectly balanced at a certain rate of speed, but tends to inevitable confusion when the speed is increased, his physical balance was sadly disarranged by the excitement of his emotional nature and the sudden shock which followed it. Days of feverish activity, during which he did the work of two men without finding the comfort of healthy fatigue, were followed by days of weariness and apathy, when the strength seemed to be gone from his arm, and the good-will to labor from his heart. His sleep was either restless and broken, or so unnaturally profound that he arose from it with a stunned, heavy head.

Among the summer's work which Mr. Woodbury had ordered, after wheat-harvest, was the draining of a swampy field which sloped towards Roaring Brook. An Irish ditcher had been engaged to work upon it, but Bute, finding that much more must be done than had been estimated, and restless almost to nervousness, assisted with his own hands. Day after day, with his legs bare to the thighs, he stood in the oozy muck, plying pick and shovel under the burning sun. Night after night, he went to bed with a curiously numb and deadened feeling, varied only by nervous starts and thrills, as if the bed were suddenly sinking under him.

One morning, he did not get up at the usual hour. Mrs. Babb went on with her labors for breakfast, expecting every moment to see him come down and wash his face at the pump outside the kitchen-door. The bacon was fried, the coffee was boiled, and still he did not appear. She opened the door of the kitchen staircase, and called in her shrillest tones, one, two, three times, until finally an answer reached her from the bedroom. Five minutes afterwards, Bute blundered

HANNAH THURSTON:

steps, and, seeing the table ready, took

Arbutus, you *have* slept, sure enough.

and from yesterday, though," said Mrs. Babb, as she

ed the bacon from the frying-pan to a

Hearing no answer, she turned around.

she exclaimed, "are you a-goin' to set down to

without washin' or combin' your hair? I do

asleep yit."

He said nothing, but looked at her with a silly

ed to confirm her words.

Arbutus!" she cried out, "wake up! You

at you're about. Dash some water on your face

ever saw the like!" and she took hold of his

He twisted it petulantly out of her grasp.

Mike," he said: "if the swamp wasn't so wet, I

down and sleep a spell."

The rigid joints of Mrs. Babb's knees seemed

suddenly. She dropped into the chair beside

face in both her trembling hands, and looked in

There was no recognition in them, and their wi

glance froze her blood. His cheeks burned like

head dropped heavily, the next moment, on his sho

tussock'll do," he murmured, and relapsed into un-

Mrs. Babb shoved her chair nearer, and allow-

rest on her shoulder, while she recovered her str

was no one else in the house. Patrick, the field

the barn, and was accustomed to be called to

Once she attempted to do this, hoping that he

reach him, but it was such an unnatural, dismal

gave up in despair. Bute started and flung of

her neck with a convulsive strength which almost

After that, she did not dare to move or speak.

boiled over, and the scent of the scorched liqu

the fat in the frying-pan, which she h

the multitude of indigo blotches, the marks of terrible blows, which appeared on his own face, breast, and arms. What happened while they were alone, Patrick always avoided telling, except to the priest. To his mind, there was a sanctity about delirium, the secrets of which it would be criminal to betray.

In two or three hours more the physician arrived, accompanied by Merryfield. The former pronounced Bute to be laboring under a very dangerous attack of congestive fever, of a typhoid character. He bled him sufficiently to reduce the excitement of the brain, prescribed the usual medicines, a little increased in quantity, and recommended great care and exactness in administering them. When he descended the stairs, the housekeeper stole after him, and grasped his arm as he entered the hall.

"Doctor," she asked, in her stern manner, "I jist want to know the truth. Is he goin' to git over it, or isn't he?"

"The chances are about even, Mrs. Babb," the physician replied. "I will not disguise from you the fact that it's a very serious case. If his constitution were not so fine, I should feel almost like giving him up. I will only say this: if we can keep him for a week, without growing much worse, we shall get the upper hand of the fever. It depends on his nurses, even more than on me."

"*I'll nuss him!*" Mrs. Babb exclaimed, defiantly. "A week, did you say? A week a'n't a life-time, and I can stand it. I stood more'n that, when Jason was sick. Don't be concerned about your orders, Sir: I'VE TOOK 'EM TO HEART, and that's enough said."

The housekeeper went back to the kitchen, clinching her fists and nodding her head—the meaning of which was, that there was to be a fair stand-up fight between Death and herself, for the possession of Arbutus Wilson, and that Death was not going to be the victor, no, not if he took herself instead, out of spite. Then and there she commenced her plan of defence. Those precautions which the physician had recommended were taken with a Draconian severity: what he had forbid-

sufficient, and as the fever was contagious in many cases, he recommended that there should be as few nurses as possible. The sympathy then took the form of recipes (every one of which was infallible), dried herbs, jellies, oranges, and the like. Mr. Jones, the miller, even sent a pair of trout, which he had caught in Roaring Brook. The housekeeper received all these articles with stern thanks, and then locked them up in her cupboard, saying to herself, "'Ta'n't time for sich messes yet: *I can git all he wants, jist now.*"

Slowly the week drew to a close, and Mrs. Babb grew more anxious and excited. The unusual strain upon her old frame began to tell; she felt her strength going, and yet the agonizing suspense in regard to Bute's fate must be quieted before she could allow it to give way altogether. Her back kept its straightness from long habit, but her knees tottered under her every time she mounted the stairs, and the muscles around her mouth began to twitch and relax, in spite of herself. She no longer questioned the physician, but silently watched his face as he came from Bute's room, and waited for him to speak.

On the seventh day, what little information he voluntarily gave afforded no relief to her mind, and for the first time the iron will which had upheld her thus far began to waver. A weariness which, it seemed to her, no amount of sleep could ever heal, assailed her during the night. Slowly she struggled on until morning, and through the eighth day until late in the afternoon, when the physician came. *This* time, as he left the sick-room, she detected a slight change in his expression. Walking slowly towards him, striving to conceal her weakness and emotion, she said, brokenly:

"Can you tell me now?"

"I don't like to promise," he answered, "but there is a chance now that the fever will exhaust itself, before quite all the power of rallying afterwards has been spent. He is not out of danger, but the prospects of his recovery are better than they were, two to one. If he gets well, your nursing,

Mrs. Babb, will have saved him. I wish all my patients could have you."

The housekeeper dropped into the nearest chair, and gave vent to her feelings in a single hoarse, dry sob. When the doctor had gone, Melinda put the teapot on the table, arranged the cups and saucers, and said: "Come, now, Miss Forty, you take a cup. I sure you needs um; you jiss' killin' you'self, honey."

Mrs. Babb attempted to comply: she lifted the saucer to her lips, and then set it down again. She felt, suddenly, very faint and sick, and the next moment an icy chill seized her, and shook her from head to foot: her lips were blue, and her seven remaining teeth rattled violently together. Melinda, alarmed, flew to her assistance; but she pushed her back with her long, thin arm, saying, "I knowed it must come so. One of us had got to go. He'll git well, now."

"Oh, Missus!" cried Melinda, and threw her apron over her head.

"Where's the use, Melindy?" said the housekeeper, sternly. "I guess *she*'ll be glad of it: she'd kind o' got used to havin' me with her."

Even yet, she did not wholly succumb to the attack. Deliberately forcing herself to drink two cups of hot tea, in order to break the violence of the chill, she slowly crept up stairs to Bute's room, where Patrick was in attendance. Him she despatched at once to Ptolemy, with a message to the Rev. Mr. Waldo, whom she requested to come at as early an hour as possible. She sent no word to the physician, but the old Melinda had shrewdness enough to discover this omission and supply it.

Wrapped in a blanket, Mrs. Babb took her seat in the old fashioned rocking-chair at Bute's bedside, and looked long and earnestly on his worn face, in the last light of day. What had become of the warm, red blood which once passed through his round cheeks, showing itself defiantly had all the suns of summer? Blood and tan seen

except the old negro woman, and Mrs. Babb needs a careful nurse immediately."

"What is it? Do tell me what it is?" cried Miss Dilworth, catching hold of the clergyman's arm with both hands.

He explained the case to her in a few words. To the astonishment of both, the little sempstress burst into a violent flood of tears. For a minute or two the agitation was so great that she was unable to speak.

"It's d-dreadful!" she sobbed at last. "Why—why didn't you send w-word to me? But I'll g-go now: don't put out your horse: take—take me there!"

"Carrie! do you really mean it?" said Mrs. Waldo.

Miss Caroline Dilworth actually stamped her foot. "Do you think I'd make fun about it?" she cried. "Yes, I mean to go, if I must go a-foot. He—they must have *somebody*, and there's nobody can go so well as I can."

"I think she is right, wife," said the clergyman.

Mrs. Waldo hesitated a moment. "I know you would be kind and careful, Carrie," she said at length, "and I could come every day, and relieve you for a while. But are you sure you are strong enough for the task?"

Miss Dilworth dried her eyes with her handkerchief and answered: "If I'm not, you'll soon find it out. I'm going over to Friend Thurston's to get some of my things to take along."

"I'll call for you in a quarter of an hour, with the buggy," said Mr. Waldo.

The little sempstress was off without saying good-by. As she went down the plank walk towards the Widow Thurston's cottage, she pushed her tangled curls behind her ears, and then held her hands clenched at her side, too much in earnest to give her head a single toss or allow her feet a single mincing step. All the latent firmness in her lithe figure was suddenly developed. It spoke in her rapid, elastic gait, in the compression of the short red lips, and the earnest forward glance of her eyes, under their uplifted lids. During the spring and

“Why, what’s the matter, child?” exclaimed the widow, as Miss Dilworth walked into the sitting-room, erect, determined, and with a real expression on her usually vapid face.

The latter explained her purpose, not without additional tears. “Nobody else would be likely to go,” she said: “they would be afraid of catching the fever. But I’m not afraid: I’ve seen the like before: I may be of use, and I ought to be there now.”

The widow looked at her with a gentle scrutiny in her eyes, which made Miss Dilworth drop her lids for the first time and bring forward her curls from behind her ears. The glance changed to one of tender sympathy, and, checking a sigh which would have brought a memory with it, the old woman said:

“I think thee’s right.”

Thus encouraged, the necessary preparations were soon made, and in an hour from that time Miss Carrie Dilworth was at Lakeside.

The negress, who knew her, received her with a mixture of rejoicing and grief: “Bress de Lord, honey!” she exclaimed; “things is goin’ bad. I’s mighty glad you come. Somebody’s got to see to ’um, all de time, an’ de cookin’ *mus*’ be ’tended to, ye knows.”

Mrs. Babb, after a long sleep, was again awake, but in a state of physical prostration which prevented her from leaving her bed. Her anxiety lest Arbutus should not receive the proper care, aggravated her condition. She kept his medicines on a chair by her bedside, and demanded constant reports of him, which neither Patrick nor Melinda could give with sufficient exactness to satisfy her.

Miss Dilworth, somewhat nervously, ascended the kitchen stairs and entered the housekeeper’s room. But the sight of the haggard, bony face, the wild restlessness in the sunken eyes, and the thin gray hair streaming loosely from the queer, old-fashioned night-cap, restored her courage through the inspiration of pity. She went forward with a quick, light step, and stooped down beside the bed.

HANNAH THURSTON :

come to help, Mrs. Babb," she said.

"I've got to take any help that comes. Hard on none of us."

ed nurse before, Mrs. Babb. I'll try. Which medicine do you take
keeper lay silent for a while, with her face. She was so weak that nei-
onishment nor her second feeling of
ithe of their usual force; the sense
overpowered them both. "That bott-
e said at last. "A tea-spoonful every
k, next. Take heed!" she gasped, a-
l to the chair, "you'll knock every
r o' yourn!"

ines were at last carefully arranged
-spoonful administered, the pillows sh-
d, the invalid having declared herself
h slipped out of the room. When s-
afterwards, her hair was drawn over
smooth as its former condition woul-
knot behind. The change was neve-
one; it gave her an air of sober
ad never before exhibited. The
once, but said nothing. Her eyes
the door, and she was growing restles-
o and see how he is?" whispered Miss
xpression of dislike passed over the hou-
few minutes she did not speak; then,
dly groaned: "I can't go myself."

opened the door of Bute's room with
curtains were down, to keep out the
n yellow light filled the chamber. The
pregnated with a pungent etherous smel-
; near the bed, sat Patrick, dozing.

a weak, husky
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shorn head, that pale, thin face, and lean, hanging arm, did they really belong to Bute? She approached on tiptoe, holding her breath, and stood beside him. A rush of tenderness, such as she had never felt towards any man, came over her. She longed to lay the wasted head on her bosom, and bring back color into the cheeks from the warmth of her own heart. He turned and muttered, with half-closed eyes, as if neither asleep nor awake, and even when she gently took the hand that lay on the coverlet, the listless fingers did not acknowledge her touch. Once he looked full in her face, but vacantly, as if not even seeing her.

A horrible fear came over her. "Is he worse?" she whispered to the Irishman.

"No, he's no wurse, Miss—maybe a bit better than he wur."

"When must he have his medicine?"

"I've jist giv' it to him. He'll be quieter now. Could ye stay here and laive me go to the barrn for an hour, jist?"

Miss Carrie reported to the housekeeper, and then relieved Patrick. She noiselessly moved the arm-chair nearer the bed, seated herself, and took Bute's feverish hand in her own. From time to time she moistened his parched lips and cooled his throbbing temples. His restless movements ceased and he lay still, though in a state of torpor, apparently, rather than sleep. It was pitiful to see him thus, stripped of his lusty strength; his red blood faded, the strong fibres of his frame weak and lax, and the light of human intelligence gone from his eye. His helplessness and unconsciousness now, brought into strong relief the sturdy, homely qualities of his mind and heart: the solemn gulf between the two conditions disclosed his real value. Miss Dilworth felt this without thinking it, as she sat beside him, yearning, with all the power of her limited nature, for one look of recognition, though it expressed no kindness for her; one rational word, though it might not belong to the dialect of love.

No such look, no such word, came. The hour slowly

dragged out its length ; Patrick came back and she returned to the housekeeper's room. The physician paid a second visit in the evening, expressed his satisfaction with her nursing, thus far, and intrusted her with the entire care of administering the medicines. He advised her, however, not to be wasteful of her strength at the outset, as the patients would not soon be able to dispense with careful watching. It was arranged that the old negress should occasionally relieve her at night. In regard to the invalids, he confessed that he had some hope of Bute's recovery; in a day or two the crisis of the fever would be over ; but Mrs. Babb, though her attack was much less violent, inspired him with solicitude. The apathetic condition of her system continued, in spite of all his efforts, and the strong will which might have upheld her, seemed to be suddenly broken.

Miss Dilworth fulfilled her duties with an astonishing patience and gentleness. Even the old housekeeper, no longer seeing the curls and drooping eyelids, or hearing the childish affectation of the voice, appeared to regard her as a different creature, and finally trusted the medicines implicitly to her care. On the day after her arrival, Bute, whose wan face and vacant eyes haunted her with a strange attraction, fell into a profound sleep. All that night he lay, apparently lifeless, but for the faint, noiseless breath that came from his parted lips. He could not be aroused to take his medicines. When this was reported to Mrs. Babb, she said, as sternly as her weakness would permit: "Let him alone! It's the turnin' p'int; he'll either die or git well, now."

This remark only increased Miss Dilworth's anxiety. Fifty times during the night she stole into his room, only to find him motionless, senseless as before. Patrick took advantage of the quiet to sleep, and snored loud and hard in his arm-chair. Once, moved by an impulse which she could not resist, she stooped down and kissed the sick man's forehead. The touch of her lips was light as a breath, but she rose,
nbling and blushing at herself, and slipped out of the room—

"Quiet—nothing but quiet as long as he sleeps!" said the physician, next morning. Patrick was excluded from the room, because, although he pulled off his boots, there were two or three planks in the floor which creaked under his weight. Miss Dilworth silently laid a row of bed-room rugs from the door to the bedside, and went and came as if on down, over the enormous tufted roses. No sound entered the room but that of the summer wind in the boughs of the nearest elm. Hour after hour of the clouded August day went by, and still no change in the sleeper, unless an increased softness in his listless hand, as she cautiously touched it.

Towards sunset, after a restless day, Mrs. Babb fell asleep, and Miss Dilworth went into Bute's room and seated herself in the chair. The prolonged slumber frightened her. "Oh," she said to herself, "what would I do if he was to die. I've treated him badly, and he would never know that I'm sorry for it—never know that—that I love him! Yes, I know it now when it's too late. If he were well, he's done loving me as he used to—but he won't get well: he'll die and leave me wretched!"

As these words passed through her mind, while she leaned forward, with her face close to that of the invalid, she suddenly noticed a change in his breathing. Its faint, regular character was interrupted: it ceased a moment, and then his breast heaved with a deeper inspiration. "Oh, he's dying!" she whispered to herself in despair. Stooping down, she kissed his forehead passionately, while her tears dropped fast upon it. His arm moved; she rose, and met the glance of his open eyes—clear, tender, happy, wondering, but not with the blank wonder of delirium. It was Bute's self that looked at her—it was Bute's first, faithful love that first came to the surface from the very depth of his heart, before any later memory could thrust itself between. He had felt the kiss on his forehead: his eyes drew her, she knew not how, to his lips. His right arm lifted itself to her neck and held the kiss a moment

fast: then it slid back again, and she sank into the chair, covering her face with her hands, and weeping.

After a while Bute's voice came to her—weak and gentle, but with its natural tone. "Carrie," said he, "what is it? What's happened?"

"Oh, Bute," she answered, "you've been very sick: you've been out of your head. And Mrs. Babb's sick too, and I've come to take care of you both. I thought you were going to die, Bute, and now you're going to get well, and I'm so glad—so happy!"

"Why are you glad, Carrie? Why did you come?" he asked, with an echo of the old reproach in his voice. The memory of his disappointment had already returned.

Nothing was further from Miss Dilworth's mind than a resort to her former arts. She was too profoundly and solemnly moved: she would tell the truth, as if it were her own dying hour. She took her hands from her face, lifted her head, and looked at him. "Because I have treated you badly, Bute," she said: "because I trifled with you wickedly. I wanted to make some atonement, and to hear you say you forgive me."

She paused. His eyes were fixed on hers, but he did not answer.

"Can you forgive me, Bute?" she faltered. "Try to do it, because I love you, though I don't expect you to love *me* any more."

"Carrie!" he cried. A new tint came to his face, a new light to his eye. His hand wandered towards her on the coverlet.

"Carrie," he repeated, feebly grasping her hand with his fingers and drawing her towards him, "once't me, now!" In the kiss that followed there was forgiveness, and answering love and a mutual compact for the future.

"You've brought me back ag'in to life," he closing his eyes, while two bright tears crept out from the lids. She sat beside him, holding his hand. H

too weak to say more, and thus ten minutes silently passed away.

"Tell me how it happened," said Bute, finally. "Where's Mother Forty?"

"I must go to her at once!" cried Miss Dilworth, starting up. "She's worrying herself to death on your account. And the doctor said if you got awake you were to keep quiet, and not talk. I must go, Bute: do lie still and try to sleep till I come back. Oh, we oughtn't to have said any thing!"

"What we've said won't do me no harm," he murmured, with a patient, happy sigh. "Go, then, Carrie: I'll keep quiet."

Miss Dilworth went into the housekeeper's room so much more swiftly than usual that the latter was awakened by the rustling of her dress. She started and turned her head with a look of terror in her eyes.

"Oh, Mrs. Babb!" cried the sempstress: "Bute's awake at last. And his mind's come back to him! And he says he'll get well!"

The old woman trembled visibly. Her bony hands were clasped under the bed-clothes and her lips moved, but no audible words came from them. Then, fixing her eyes on the face of the kneeling girl, she asked: "What have you been a-sayin' to him?"

Miss Dilworth involuntarily drooped her lids and a deep color came into her face. "I asked him," she answered, "to forgive me for my bad behavior towards him."

"Nothin' else?"

"Yes, Mrs. Babb, I said he could do it now, because I love him."

"You do, do ye?"

"Yes, and he has forgiven me."

"Hnh!"

With this, her customary snort, when she was not prepared to express a decided opinion, the housekeeper closed her eyes and seemed to meditate. Presently, however, she turned her

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ernly, though without any signs of

I want to be alone a spell.

d. When she returned, at the time
ring the medicine, Mrs. Babb had re-
sive patience. She made no further
versation which had taken place, nor
place afterwards. A change had come

She lay for hours, with her eyes open,
vidently without suffering, yet keenly
hat took place. She took her medicines
air of listless obedience to the orders of
without any apparent result. Stimulants

failed to produce their customary effect.
ne grew weaker, and the physician finally
s she could be roused and stirred in some
increasing prostration, he could do nothing
nowledge of the favorable change in Bute's
as before, there was little hope that any
excitement remained.

he rallied with a rapidity which amazed the
scribed to an unusual vitality of his own the
invalid had really drawn from another. The
ow was, to retard his impatient conjugal au-
rth was obliged to anticipate her usual happy
oin silence when he had still a that authority
naked and unanswered. When room, on the

forced to absent herself from the in such case,
ng Mrs. Babb. His impatience, and the little
as detrimental as his loquacity, apt.
as never at ease except when he slept, housekeep-
sing a certain stage in the fever, the made feebl-
rk rapidly. Her mind, nevertheless, acted on her
tain its ascendancy—efforts which one day she as-
ompleted the ruin of its faculties. violent effort
ss Dilworth by rising in her bed with a

"I must go and see him!" she said: "help me into his room!"

"Oh, you cannot!" cried Miss Dilworth, supporting her with one arm around her waist. "Lie down: you are not strong enough. He will be able to come to you in a day or two."

"No, no! to-day!" gasped the housekeeper. "I a'n't certain o' knowin' him to-morrow, or o' bein' able to say to him what I've got to say." Thereupon her temporary strength gave way, and she sank down on the bed in a fainting state.

After she had somewhat revived, Miss Dilworth took counsel with herself, and soon came to a decision. She went down stairs and summoned Patrick, who carefully wrapped up Bute and placed him in the arm-chair. She herself then assisted in carrying him into the housekeeper's room, and placing him by the bedside. A look of unspeakable fondness came over Mrs. Babb's haggard face; the tears silently flowed from her eyes and rolled down the wrinkles in her hollow cheeks.

"Cheer up, Mother Forty," said Bute, who was the first to speak. "I'm gittin' on famous' and 'll soon be round again."

"It's as it should be, Arbutus," she whispered, hoarsely, catching her breath between the words; "the old 'un 'll go and the young 'un 'll stay. 'T had to be one of us."

"Don't say that; we'll take care of you—Carrie and me. Won't we, Carrie?"

"Yes, Bute," said Carrie, with her handkerchief to her eyes.

Mrs. Babb looked from one to another, but without any sign of reproof. She feebly shook her head. "What must be must," said she; "my time's come. P'raps I sha'n't see you no more, Arbutus. Maybe I ha'n't done my duty by you always; maybe I've seemed hard, once't and a while, but I meant it for your good, and I don't want you to have any hard thoughts ag'in me when I'm gone."

"Mother Forty!" cried Bute, his eyes filling and overflow-

ing, "God knows I ha'n't nothin' ag'in you! You've been as good to me as you knowed how; it's me that's been rough, and forgetful o' how you took care o' me when I was a little boy. Don't talk that a-way now, don't!"

"Do you really mean it, Arbutus? Do you forgive me my trespasses, as I forgive them that trespass ag'in me? Can I go to Jason and say I've done my duty by you?"

Bute could not answer: he was crying like a child. He slid forward in the chair. Miss Dilworth put her arm around his waist to steady him, and they sank down together on their knees beside the bed. Bute's head fell forward on the coverlet. The housekeeper placed both her hands upon it.

"Take my blessin', child!" she said, in a feebler voice. "You've been a good boy, Arbutus. I'll tell *her*, and I'll tell your mother. Maybe I'll have a seat betwixt her and Jason. All I have'll be yourn. But you mustn't stay here: say good-by to me and go."

"Will you bless me, with him?" faltered Miss Carrie.

The left hand slowly moved to her head, and rested there. "Be a good wife to him when the time comes, and I'll bless you always. There a'n't many like him, and I hope you know it."

"I do know it," she sobbed; "there's *nobody* like him."

"I want you to leave the money where it is," said the housekeeper, "and only draw the interest. You'll have an easier time of it in your old days than what I've had; but don't begrudge it to you. It's time you were goin'—a good-by, child!"

The sempstress, small as she was, lifted Bute up on his feet for the first time in his remembrance, she kissed him twice, not with any violent outburst of feeling, but with a tender gravity as if it were a necessary duty, the old woman turned over on the pillow, saying "Amen!" and was speedily replaced

CHAPTER XXIV.

VARIOUS CHANGES, BUT LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE STORY.

As soon as the news of Mrs. Babb's death became known, the neighbors hastened to Lakeside to offer their help. The necessary arrangements for the funeral were quietly and speedily made, and, on the second day afterwards, the body of the housekeeper was laid beside that of Jason Babb, in the Presbyterian churchyard at Ptolemy, where he had been slumbering for the last twenty-three years. The attendance was very large, for all the farmers' wives in the valley had known Mrs. Babb, and still held her receipts for cakes, preserves, and pickles in high esteem. The Reverends Styles and Waldo made appropriate remarks and prayers at the grave, so that no token of respect was wanting. All the neighbors said, as they drove homewards, "The funeral was a credit to her." Her spirit must have smiled in stern satisfaction, even from its place by Jason's side, and at the feet of Mrs. Dennison, as it looked down and saw that her last unconscious appearance among mortals was a success.

Miss Dilworth took counsel of her friends, Hannah Thurston and Mrs. Waldo, on the day of the funeral. She confessed to them, with returning misgivings, what had taken place between Bute Wilson and herself, and was a little surprised at the hearty gratification which they both expressed.

"How glad I am!" cried Mrs. Waldo; "it is the very thing!"

"Yes," said Hannah Thurston, in her grave, deliberate manner, "I think you have made a good choice, Carrie."

If any spark of Miss Caroline Dilworth's old ambition still burned among the ashes of her dreams, it was extinguished at that moment. The prophets of reform were thenceforth dead to her. She even took a consolation in thinking that if her wish had been fulfilled, her future position might have had its embarrassments. She might have been expected to sympathize with ideas which she did not comprehend—to make use of new shibboleths before she had learned to pronounce them—to counterfeit an intelligent appreciation when most conscious of her own incompetency. Now, she would be at ease. Bute would never discover any deficiency in her. She spoke better English and used finer words than he did, and if she made a mistake now and then, he wouldn't even notice it. With the disappearance of her curls her whole manner had become more simple and natural. Her little affectations broke out now and then, it is true, but they had already ceased to be used as baits to secure a sentimental interest. There was even hope that her attachment to Bute would be the means of developing her somewhat slender stock of common-sense.

"Bute says we must be married as soon as he gets well," she said: "he won't wait any longer. Is there any harm in my staying here and taking care of him until he's entirely out of danger?"

Mrs. Waldo reflected a moment. "Certainly none until Mr. Woodbury returns," she said. "Mr. Waldo has answered his letter to Bute, which came this morning. If he leaves Saratoga at once, he will be here in three or four days. The doctor says you are an admirable nurse, and that is reason enough why you should not leave at present."

"The other reason *ought* to be enough," said Hannah Thurston. "She owes a wife's duty towards him now, when he needs help which she can give. I am sure Mr. Woodbury will see it in the same light. He is noble and honorable."

"Why, Hannah!" cried Mrs. Waldo, "I thought you and he were as far apart as the opposite poles!"

"Perhaps we are, in our views of certain subjects," was the

quiet reply. "I can, nevertheless, properly estimate his character as a man."

Mrs. Waldo suppressed a sigh. "If you could only estimate your own true character as a woman!" she thought.

Miss Dilworth's duties were now materially lightened. The danger of further contagion had passed, and some one of the neighbors came every day to assist her. Bute only required stimulating medicines, and the usual care to prevent a relapse, of which there seemed to be no danger. He began to recover his healthful sleep at night, and his nurse was thus enabled to keep up her strength by regular periods of rest. Once or twice a day she allowed him to talk, so long as there was no appearance of excitement or fatigue. These half-hours were the happiest Bute had ever known. To the delicious languor and peace of convalescence, was added the active, ever-renewed bliss of his restored love, and the promises which it whispered. He delighted to call Miss Carrie, in anticipation, "Little wife!" pausing, each time he did so, to look for the blush which was sure to come, and the smile on the short red lip which was the sweetest that ever visited a woman's face. Of course it was.

One day, nevertheless, as he lay looking at her, and thinking how much more steady and sensible she seemed since curls were gathered up—how much more beautiful the ring of light brown hair upon her temples—a cloud came over his face. "Carrie," he said, "there's one thought that worries me. I want you to put it straight, if you can. S'pose I hadn't lost my senses, would you ever have married me?"

She was visibly embarrassed, but presently answered: "I have passed over her face, and she answered: 'Likely not,' said he. 'You spoke plain enough to me to say the first word, and 'twasn't for me to say the first word, and in a man's burnt his fingers once't, he keeps to tal- ire. But I want to know why you come

me and Mother Forty. Was it only because you were sorry, and wanted to pay me for my disapp'intment in that way? Can you lay your hand on your heart and say there was any thing more?"

Miss Carrie immediately laid her hand on her heart. "Yes, Bute," she said, "there *was* something more. I was beginning to find it out, before, but when I heard you were so bad, it came all at once."

"Look here, Carrie," said Bute, still very earnestly, although the cloud was beginning to pass away, "some men have hearts like shuttlecocks, banged back and forth from one gal to another, and none the wuss of it. But I a'n't one of 'em. Whenever I talk serious, I 'xpect to be answered serious. I believe what you say to me. I believed it a'ready, but I wanted to be double sure. You and me have got to live together as man and wife. 'Twon't be all skylarkin': we've got to work, and help one another, and take keer o' others besides, if things goes right. What'll pass in a gal, won't pass in a married woman: you must get shut o' your coquettin' ways. I see you've took the trap out o' your hair, and now you must take it out o' your eyes. 'Ta'n't that it'll mean any thing any more—if I thought it did, I'd feel like killin' you—but it won't look right."

"You mustn't mind my foolishness, Bute," she answered, penitently, "and you mustn't think of Seth Wattles!"

"Seth be—*con-sarn'd*!" Bute exclaimed. "When I see you pickin' up dead frogs, I'll believe you like to shake hands with Seth! I've got agreeabler thoughts than to have him in my head. Well—I don't bear no grudge ag'in him now; but I can't like him."

"I don't like him either. Fancy such a fellow as he thinking himself good enough for Hannah Thurston! There's no man good enough for her!"

"Like enough *she* thinks herself too good for any man," Bute remarked. "But them a'n't the women, Carrie, that a man wants to marry. It'll be a lucky woman that gits Mr. Max."

seems to me as much mine as it is your'n. If I had a farm o' my own, it'd seem strange like, as if it belonged to somebody else. I've got the hang of every field here, and know jist what it'll bring. I want to make a good livin': I don't deny that; but if I hold on to what I've got now, and don't run no resks, and put out th' interest ag'in every year, it'll roll up jist about as fast and a darned sight surer, than if I was to set up for myself. If you're willin', Mr. Max., we can fix it somehow. If the tenant-house on the 'Nacreon road was patched up a little, it'd do for the beginnin'."

"We can arrange it together, Bute," said Woodbury, rising. "Now you have talked long enough, and must rest. I will see you again before I go to bed."

As Miss Dilworth, at his request, took her seat at the table and poured out the tea, Woodbury looked at her with a new interest. He had scarcely noticed her on previous occasions, and hence there was no first impression to be removed. It seemed to him, indeed, as if he saw her for the first time now. The ripples in her hair caught the light; her complexion was unusually fair and fresh; the soft green of her eyes became almost brown under the long lashes, and the mouth was infantine in shape and color. A trifle of affectation in her manner did not disharmonize with such a face; it was natural to her, and would have been all the same, had she been eighty years old instead of twenty-six. With this affectation, however, were combined two very useful qualities—a most scrupulous neatness and an active sense of order. "Upon my soul, it is Lisette herself," said Woodbury to himself, as he furtively watched her airs and movements. Who would have expected to find so many characteristics of the Parisian grisette in one of our staid American communities? And how astonishing, could he have known it, her ambitious assumption of Hannah Thurston's views! It was a helmet of Pallas, which not only covered her brow, but fell forward over her saucy retroussé nose, and weighed her slender body half-way to the earth.

She felt his scrutiny, and performed her tea-table duties with

two spots of bright color in her cheeks. Woodbury knew that she suspected what Bute's principal communication to him had been, and, with his usual straightforward way of meeting a delicate subject, decided to speak to her at once. She gave a little start of confusion—not entirely natural—as he commenced, but his manner was so serious, frank, and respectful, that she soon felt ashamed of herself and was drawn, to her own surprise, to answer him candidly and naturally.

"Bute has told me, Miss Dilworth," said he, "of your mutual understanding. I am very glad of it, for his sake. He is an honest and faithful fellow, and deserves to be happy. I think he is right, also, in not unnecessarily postponing the time, though perhaps I should not think so, if his marriage were to deprive me of his services. But he prefers to continue to take charge of Lakeside, rather than buy or lease a farm for himself. I hope you are satisfied with his decision?"

"Yes, Mr. Woodbury," she answered: "I should not like to leave this neighborhood. I have no relatives in the country, except an aunt in Tiberius. My brother went to Iowa five years ago."

"Bute must have a home," Woodbury continued. "He spoke of my tenant-house, but besides being old and ruinous, it is not well situated, either for its inmates, or for the needs of the farm. I had already thought of tearing it down, and building a cottage on the knoll, near the end of the lane. But that would take time, and——"

"Oh, we can wait, Mr. Woodbury!"

He smiled. "I doubt whether Bute would be as ready to wait as you, Miss Dilworth. I am afraid if I were to propose it, he would leave me at once. No, we must make some other arrangement in the mean time. I have been turning the matter over in my mind and have a proposition to make to you."

"To me!"

"Yes. Mrs. Babb's death leaves me without a housekeeper. My habits are very simple, the household is small, and I see

already that you are capable of doing all that will be required. Of course you will have whatever help you need; I ask nothing more than a general superintendence of my domestic affairs until your new home is ready. If you have no objection of your own to make, will you please mention it to Bute?"

"Bute will be so pleased!" she cried. "Only, Mr. Woodbury, if it isn't more than I am capable of doing! If I'm able to give you satisfaction!"

"I shall be sure of your wish to do so, Miss Dilworth," said Woodbury, rising from the table; "and I have the further guarantee that you will have Bute to please, as well as myself."

He went into the library and lighted a cigar. "Lucky fellow!" he said to himself, with a sigh. "He makes no intellectual requirements from his wife, and he has no trouble in picking up a nice little creature who is no doubt perfection in his eyes, and who will be faithful to him all his days. If she doesn't know major from minor; if she confuses tenses and doubles negatives; if she eats peas with her knife, and trims her bonnet with colors at open war with each other; if she never heard of Shakespeare, and takes Petrarch to be the name of a mineral—what does he care? She makes him a tidy home; she understands and soothes his simple troubles; she warms his lonely bed, and suckles the vigorous infants that spring from his loins; she gives an object to his labor, a contented basis to his life, and a prospect of familiar society in the world beyond the grave. Simple as this relation of the sexes is for him, he feels its sanctity no less than I. His espousals are no less chaste; his wedded honor is as dear, his paternal joys as pure. My nature claims all this from woman, but, alas! it claims more. The cultivated intelligence comes in to question and criticize the movements of the heart. Here, on one side, is goodness, tenderness, fidelity; on the other, grace, beauty, refinement, intellect—both needs must be fulfilled. How shall I ever reach this double marriage, except

through a blind chance? Yet here is one woman in whom it would be nearly fulfilled, and a strange delusion into which she has fallen warns me to think of her no more !”

The conscious thread of his thoughts broke off, and they loosened themselves into formless reverie. As he rose to revisit Bute's chamber, he paused a moment, thinking: “That I can analyze her nature thus deliberately, is a proof that I do not love her.”

Bute was delighted with the new arrangement which Woodbury had proposed to Miss Dilworth. The latter would leave in a few days, he said, and spend the subsequent two or three weeks before the wedding could take place, at the Widow Thurston's.

“After it's all over, Mr. Max.,” said Bute, “she shall stay here and tend to the house jist as long as you want ; but—you won't mind my sayin' it, will you?—there's only one right kind of a housekeeper for *you*, and I hope you won't be too long a-findin' her.”

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH HANNAH THURSTON MAKES A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

IN another week, Bute was able to dispense with the grateful nursing which had more than reconciled him to the confinement of his sick-room. He required no attendance at night, and was able to sit, comfortably pillowed, for a great part of the day. He consumed enormous quantities of chicken-broth, and drank immoderately of Old Port and Albany Ale. Miss Dilworth, therefore, made preparations to leave: she was now obliged to sew for herself, and a proper obedience to custom required that she should not remain at Lakeside during the last fortnight of her betrothal.

On the morning of her departure, Woodbury called her into the library. "You have done me a great service, Miss Dilworth," said he, "and I hope you will allow me to acknowledge it by furnishing you with one article which I know will have to be provided." With these words he opened a paper parcel and displayed a folded silk, of the most charming tint of silver-gray.

The little sempstress looked at it in speechless ecstasy. "It's heavenly!" she at last cried, clasping her hands. "I'm obliged to you a thousand times, Mr. Woodbury. It's too much, indeed it is!"

"Bute won't think so," he suggested.

She snatched the parcel, and darted up-stairs in three bounds. "Oh, Bute!" she cried, bursting into his room, "only look at this! It's my wedding-dress! And he's just given it to me!"

aging to your guests, even if she were willing to go. Mrs. Bue is a complete intelligence office for Ptolemy servants. Your only chance is to see her."

* "And if that fails?"

"Then there is no hope. I shall be vexed, for I want to see this Mrs. Blake. If it were not for taking care of my good husband, I should myself be willing to act as mistress of Lakeside for a few days."

"I knew you would be able to help me!" cried Woodbury, joyfully. "Let me add Mr. Waldo to the number of my guests. I shall be delighted to have him, and the change may be refreshing to him. Besides, you will have us all at the Cimmerian Church, if the Blakes remain over a Sunday."

"You are mistaken, if you supposed that any thing of the kind was in my thoughts," said Mrs. Waldo. "But the proposal sounds very pleasantly. I am sure we both should enjoy it very much, but I cannot accept; you know, before consulting with my husband."

"Leave Mr. Waldo to me."

The matter was very easily arranged. The clergyman, faithful to the promise of his teeth, appreciated a generous diet. His own table was oftentimes sparsely supplied, and he was conscious of a gastric craving which gave him discouraging views of life. There was no likelihood of any immediate birth or death in his congregation, and it was not the season of the year when members were usually assailed by doubts and given to backsliding. More fortunate clergymen went to the watering places, or even to Europe, to rest their exhausted lungs; why should he not go to Lakeside for a week? They had no servant, and could shut up the parsonage during their absence: but the old horse?

"Wife, we must get somebody to look after Dobbin," he said, thoughtfully.

"Bring Dobbin along," Woodbury laughed, "my old Dick will be glad to see him."

Although neither he nor the Waldos were aware that they

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they were alike in the correctness of their instincts, . Blake the faculty had been more exquisitely de- rough her greater social experience. It was the same key, but played an octave higher. Mrs. more inclined to receive her enjoyment of life pulse and immediate sensation ; Mr. s. Blake through nic discrimination. Both, perhaps, would have fortune with like calmness ; but the resignation of have sprung from her temperament, and of the her reason. The fact that the resemblances in their womanhood were developed from different bases of increased the interest and respect which they felt.

point, at least, they were heartily in accord ; namely, dship for Woodbury. Mrs. Blake was familiar, already described, with his early manhood in New furnished Mrs. Waldo many interesting particulars for the description which the latter gave of his life e. They were also agreed that there was too much sweetness in him to be wasted on the desert air, and place, beautiful as it was, could never be an actual l he had brought a mistress to it.

is already chafing under Mrs. Babb's rule," said Mrs. they walked up and down the broad garden-alley, will be less satisfied with the new housekeeper. fe—as she will be—is a much more agreeable per- will no doubt try to do her best, but he will get very er face and her silly talk. It will be all the worse he has not a single characteristic strong enough for ze upon and say : This offends me! You know what

ctly ; and your remark is quite correct—Mr. Wood- ne of those men who demand positive character, of d, in the persons with whom they associate. He likes s, and this new housekeeper, from your description used. In the a piece that will fade the longer it is used.

case, she will become intolerable to him, though she may not possess one serious fault."

"That characteristic of his," said Mrs. Waldo, "is the very reason, I think, why it will be difficult for him to find a wife."

"By the by," asked Mrs. Blake, pausing in her walk, "he spoke to me, when we met on the Saguenay, of one woman, here, in your neighborhood, who seems to have made a strong impression upon his mind."

"It was certainly Hannah Thurston!"

"He did not give me her name. He seemed to admire her sincerely, except in one fatal particular—she is strong-minded."

"Yes, it is Hannah!" exclaimed Mrs. Waldo. "She is a noble girl, and every way worthy of such a man as he—that is, if she were not prejudiced against all men."

"You quite interest me about her. I heard Bessie Stryker once, when she lectured in St. Louis, and must confess that, while she did not convince *me*, I could see very well how she had convinced herself. Since then, I have been rather tolerant towards the strong-minded class. The principal mistakes they make arise from the fact of their not being married, or of having moral and intellectual milksops for husbands. In either case, no woman can understand our sex, or the opposite."

"I have said almost the same thing to Hannah Thurston," Mrs. Waldo remarked. "If she would only take one step, the true knowledge would come. But she won't."

"I suspect she has not yet found her Fate," said Mrs. Blake. "Was she ever in love, do you think?"

"No, I am sure of it. She has refused two good offers of marriage to my knowledge, and one of them was from a man who believed in the doctrine of Women's Rights. I can't understand her, though I love her dearly, and we have been intimate for years."

"Can you not contrive a way for me to make her acquaintance?"

"Whenever you please. I have no doubt she remembers the story Mr. Woodbury told us last winter. I am hostess,

landscape, branching thence to Ptolemy and its inhabitants, to their character, their degree of literary cultivation, and the means of enlightenment which they enjoyed, rapidly and naturally approached the one important topic. Hannah Thurston mentioned, among other things, the meetings which were held in the interest of Temperance, Anti-Slavery, Non-Resistance, and Women's Rights; Mrs. Blake gave her impressions of Bessie Stryker's lecture: Hannah Thurston grasped the whole gauntlet where only the tip of a finger had been presented, and both women were soon in the very centre of the debatable ground.

"What I most object to," said Mrs. Blake, "is that women should demand a sphere of action for which they are incapacitated—understand me, not by want of intellect, but by sex."

"Do you overlook all the examples which History furnishes?" cried Hannah Thurston. "What is there that Woman has not done?"

"Commanded an army."

"Zenobia!"

"And was brought in chains to Rome: Founded an empire?"

"She has *ruled* empires!"

"After they were already made, and with the help of men. Established a religion? Originated a system of philosophy? Created an order of architecture? Developed a science? Invented a machine?"

"I am sure I could find examples of her having distinguished herself in all these departments of intellect," Hannah Thurston persisted.

"Distinguished herself! Ah! yes, I grant it. After the raw material of knowledge has been dug up and quarried out, and smelted, and hewn into blocks, she steps in with her fine hand and her delicate tools, and assists man in elaborating the nicer details. But she has never yet done the rough work and I don't believe she ever will."

"But with the same education—the same preparation—

same advantages, from birth, which man possesses? She is taught to anticipate a contracted sphere—she is told that these pursuits were not meant for her sex, and the determination to devote herself to them comes late, when it comes at all. Those intellectual muscles which might have had the same vigor as man's, receive no early training. She is thus cheated out of the very basis of her natural strength: if she has done so much, fettered, what might she not do if her limbs were free?" Hannah Thurston's face glowed: her eyes kindled, and her voice came sweet and strong with the intensity of a faith that *would* not allow itself to be shaken. She was wholly lost in her subject.

After a pause, Mrs. Blake quietly said: "Yes, if we had broad shoulders, and narrow hips, we could no doubt wield sledge-hammers, and quarry stone, and reef sails in a storm."

Again the same chill as Woodbury's conversation had sometimes invoked, came over Hannah Thurston's feelings. Here was the same dogged adherence to existing facts, she thought, the same lack of aspiration for a better order of things! The assertion, which she would have felt inclined to resent in a man, saddened her in a woman. The light faded from her face, and she said, mournfully: "Yes, the physical superiority of man gives him an advantage, by which our sex is overawed and held in subjection. But the rule of force cannot last forever. If woman would but assert her equality of intellect, and claim her share of the rights belonging to human intelligence, she would soon transform the world."

Mrs. Blake instantly interpreted the change in countenance and tone; it went far towards giving her the key to Hannah Thurston's nature. Dropping the particular question which had been started, she commenced anew. "When I lived in New York," said she, "I had many acquaintances among the artists, and what I learned of them and their lives taught me this lesson—that there can be no sadder mistake than to miscalculate one's powers. There is very little of the ideal and imaginative element in me, as you see, but I have learned its

to contradict them. But she was sure, nevertheless, that Mrs. Blake's statement was not sufficient to overthrow her theory of woman's equality. She reflected a moment before she spoke again, and her tone was less earnest and confident than usual.

"The statesmen and jurists, the clergymen, physicians, and men of science," she said, "comprise but a small number of the men. Could not our sex spare an equal number? Would not some of us sacrifice a part of our lives, if it were necessary?"

"And lose the peace and repose of domestic life, which consoles and supports the public life of man!" exclaimed Mrs. Blake. "It is not in *his* nature to make this sacrifice—still less is it in ours. You do not think what you are saying. There is no true woman but feels at her bosom the yearning for a baby's lips. The milk that is never sucked dries into a crust around her heart. There is no true woman but longs, in her secret soul, for a man's breast to lay her head on, a man's eyes to give her the one look which he gives to nobody else in the world!"

Hannah Thurston's eyes fell before those of Mrs. Blake. She painfully felt the warm flush that crept over neck, and cheek, and brow, betraying her secret, but betraying it, fortunately, to a noble and earnest-hearted woman. A silence ensued, which neither knew how to break.

"What are you plotting so seriously?" broke in Woodbury's voice, close behind them. "I must interrupt this *tête-à-tête*, Mrs. Blake. See what you are losing?"

They both rose and turned, in obedience to the movement of his hand. The sun had sunk so low that the shade of the western hill filled all the bed of the valley, and began to creep up the eastern side. A light blue film was gathering over the marsh at the head of the lake, where it divided into two lines, pointing up the creeks. But the patches of woodland on the East Atauga hill, the steep fields of tawny oat-stubble, and the fronts of white farm-houses and barns in the distance, were

drowned in a bath of airy gold, slowly deepening into flame-color as its tide-mark rose higher on the hills. Over Ptolemy a mountain of fire divided the forking valleys, which receded on either hand, southward, into dim depths of amethyst. Higher and higher crept the splendor, until it blazed like a fringe on the topmost forests and fields : then it suddenly went out and was transferred to a rack of broken cloud, overhead.

Mrs. Styles presently made her appearance, bonneted for the return to Ptolemy. Hannah Thurston was to accompany her. But as they drove homewards through the cool evening air, through the ripe odors of late-flowering grasses, and the golden-rods on the road-banks and the eupatoriums in the meadows, it was the passionate yearning of the woman, not the ambition of the man, which had entire possession of her heart.

CHAPTER XXVI

IN WHICH A WEDDING TAKES PLACE.

"Do you know, Mr. Woodbury," said Mrs. Blake, the same evening, as they were all gathered together in the library, "that I have taken an immense liking to your strong-minded woman?"

"Indeed!" he remarked, with assumed indifference.

"Yes. I had a serious talk with her. I employed a moral probe, and what do you think I found?"

"What?" he repeated, turning towards her with an expression of keen interest.

"No, it would not be fair," tantalizingly answered Mrs. Blake, in her most deliberate tones. "I shall not betray any discoveries I have accidentally made. She is too earnest and genuine a nature to be disposed of with a pleasantry. I will only say this—as far as she is wrong—which, of course, is admitting that she is partly right, I, woman as I am, would undertake to convince her of it. A man, therefore, ought to be able to restore her to the true faith more easily. Yet you have been living at Lakeside nearly a year and have not succeeded."

"I have never tried, my friend," said Woodbury.

"Really?"

"Of course not. Why should I? She is relentless in her prejudices, even in those which spring from her limited knowledge of life. The only cure for such is in a wider experience. She cannot understand that a humane and liberal tolerance of all varieties of habit and opinion is compatible with sincerity of character. She would make every stream turn some kind of a mill, while I am willing to see one now and then dash

strong, refreshing breeze. In other households, her sharp, clear, detective nature might have uncomfortably blown away the drapery from many concealed infirmities, but here it encountered only naked truthfulness, and was welcome. She bowed down at once before the expression of past trials in the old woman's face, and her manner assumed a tenderness all the sweeter and more fascinating that it rarely came to the surface. She took Miss Dilworth's measure at a single glance, and the result, as she afterwards expressed it to Mrs. Waldo, was much more favorable than that lady had anticipated.

"He could not have a better housekeeper than she, just at present."

"Why, you astonish me!" Mrs. Waldo exclaimed; "why do you think so?"

"I have no particular reason for thinking so," Mrs. Blake answered; "it's a presentiment."

Mrs. Waldo turned away her eyes from Dobbin's ears (which she always watched with some anxiety, although the poor old beast had long since forgotten how to shy them back), and inspected her companion's face. It was entirely grave and serious. "Oh," she said at last, in a puzzled tone, "that's all?"

"Yes, and therefore you won't think it worth much. But my presentiments are generally correct: wait and see."

The Blakes remained over a Sunday, and went, as it was generally surmised they would, to the Cimmerian Church. The attendance was unusually large on that day, embracing, to the surprise of Mrs. Waldo, the Hamilton Bues and Miss Ruhany Goodwin. On the entrance of the strangers into the church, a subdued rustling sound ran along the benches (pews were not allowed by the Cimmerians), and most of the heads turned stealthily towards the door. The immediate silence that followed had something of disappointment in it. There was nothing remarkable in the tall, keen-eyed lady in plain black silk, or the stout, shrewd-faced, gray-whiskered man who followed her. Miss Josephine's flat straw

hat and blue silk mantilla attracted much more among the younger members of the congregation. A hymn had been given out, however, and the first triumphant choral of "Wilmot" (according to books, but Carl Maria von Weber in the world heard, a new voice gradually took its place in the accustomed and imperfectly according sound soon assumed the right of a ruler, forcing the step with it in the majestic movement of the remarkably sweet, but of astonishing strength lic sonority, it pealed like a trumpet at the disciplined four battalions of singers, and elevated new confidence in themselves.

The voice was Mrs. Blake's. She professed to for she knew her own deficiencies so well, that tempted to conceal them; but her voice had element, in a woman, of power, and was there effective in a certain range of subjects. In so sang any except Scotch songs, and of these es dated from the rebellion of 1745—those gl lays, breathing of the Highlands and the heart Prince Charlie, which cast an immortal poeti impotent attempt to restore a superannuate she lived in those days Mrs. Blake might hav to the gathering clans: as it was, these son expression of the fine heroic capacity which nature. She enjoyed the singing fully as mu the hearing, and, if the truth could be disti quite probable that she had prompted Mr. lection of the hymn. Her participation in it Cimmerian congregation on her side, and th privately expressed their belief that the clerg an undue advantage of his opportunities as a side, to instil his heretical ideas of baptism in Mr. and Mrs. Blake. It transpired afterwards the latter were Episcopalian, both by faith and inheritance.

The day at last arrived for the breaking up of the new household, to the great regret of all its members. Miss Josephine tore herself with difficulty from the library, only partially consoled by the present of "Undine" and "Sintram." George wanted to stay with Bute and learn to trap musk-rats and snare rabbits. Mr. Waldo half sheathed his teeth with his insufficient lips and went back to his plain fare with a sigh of resignation. The ladies kissed each other, and Woodbury would assuredly have kissed them both if he had known how charitably they would have received the transgression. Bute was embarrassed beyond all his previous experience by the present of half a dozen silver tea-spoons which Mrs. Blake had bought in Ptolemy and presented to him through her boy George.

"You are going to begin housekeeping, I hear," said she, "and you must let George help you with the outfit."

Bute colored like a young girl. "They're wuth more'n the silver, comin' to us that-a-way," he said at last. "I'll tell Carrie, and we sha'n't never use 'em, without thinkin' o' you and George."

The farewells were said, and Lakeside relapsed into its accustomed quiet. The borrowed chambermaid was returned to the Ptolemy House, and the old Melinda alone remained in the kitchen, to prepare her incomparable corn-cake and broiled chicken. Bute was now able, with proper precautions, to walk about the farm and direct the necessary labor, without taking part in it. Woodbury resumed his former habit of horseback exercise, and visited some of his acquaintances in Ptolemy and the neighborhood, but the departure of his pleasant guests left a very perceptible void in his life. He had sufficient resources within himself to endure solitude, but he was made, like every healthily-constituted man, for society.

Thus a few days passed away, and Bute's convalescence began to take the hue of absolute health. He now visited Ptolemy every day or two, to watch the progress made in a

certain silver-gray dress, and to enjoy the exquisite novelty of consulting Miss Dilworth about their future household arrangements. The latter sometimes, from long habit, reassumed her former air of coquetry, but it was no longer tantalizing, and an earnest word or look sufficed to check her. A charming humility took the place of her affected superiority, and became her vastly better, as she had sense enough to discern. Her ringlets had disappeared forever, and her eyelids gradually recovered strength for an open and steady glance. In fact, her eyes were prettier than she had supposed. Their pale beryl-tint deepened into brown at the edges, and when the pupil expanded in a subdued light, they might almost have been called hazel. In Spain they would have been 'sung as "*ojos verdes*" by the poets. On the whole, Bute had chosen more sensibly than we supposed, when we first made Miss Dilworth's acquaintance.

The arrangements for the wedding were necessarily few and simple. Woodbury first proposed that it should be solemnized at Lakeside, but Mrs. Waldo urged, that, since her husband was to officiate on the occasion, it would be better for many reasons—one of which was Mrs. Babb's recent death—that it should take place at the parsonage. Miss Dilworth was secretly bent on having a bridesmaid, who should, of course, be Hannah Thurston, but was obliged to relinquish her project, through the unexpected resistance which it encountered on the part of Bute. "None of the fellows that I could ask to stand up with me would do for *her*," said he.

"Why not Mr. Woodbury?" suggested Miss Carrie.

"He! Well—he'd do it in a minute if I was to ask him, but I won't. Between you and me, Carrie, they can't bear each other; they're like cats and dogs."

"Bute! a'n't you ashamed?"

"What? O' tellin' the truth? No, nor a'n't likely to be. See here, Carrie, why can't we let it alone? Mr. Waldo'll tie us jist as tight, all the same, and when it's over you won't know the difference."

"But—Bute," Miss Carrie persisted, "I think she expects it of me."

"She ha'n't set her heart on it, I'll be bound. I'll ask her. Miss Hannah!"

The two were in the open air, at the corner of the cottage nearest the garden. The window of the little sitting-room was open, and Bute's call brought Miss Thurston to it.

"Oh, Bute, don't!" pleaded Miss Dilworth, ready to cry, but he had already gone too far to stop. "Miss Hannah," said he, "we're talkin' about the weddin'. I'm thinkin' it'll be jist as well without waiters. Carrie'd like to have you for bridesmaid, and I'm sure I'd be glad of it, only, you know, you'd have to stand up with somebody on my side, and there's nobody I could ask but Mr. Max, and—and I'm afraid *that* wouldn't be agreeable, like, for either o' you."

"Bute!" cried Carrie, in real distress.

Bute, however, was too sure of the truth of what he had said to suspect that he could possibly give pain by uttering it. The first rude shock of his words over, Hannah Thurston felt greatly relieved. "You were right to tell me, Arbutus," said she; "for, although I should be quite willing, at another time, to do as Carrie wishes, no matter whom *you* might choose as your nearest friend, I think it best, at present, that there should be as little ceremony as possible. I will talk with you about it afterwards, Carrie." And she moved away from the window.

At length the important day arrived. Bute woke when the cocks crowed three o'clock, and found it impossible to get to sleep again. His new clothes (not made by Seth Wattles) were in the top drawer of the old bureau, and Melinda had laid some sprigs of lavender among them. He tried to imagine how he would look in them, how he would feel during the ceremony and afterwards, how curious it must be to have a wife of your own, and everybody know it. He pictured to himself his friends on the neighboring farms, saying: "How's your wife, Bute?" when they met, and then he thought of

Forty, and what a pity that she had not lived long to know Carrie Wilson—who, of course, would be a different creature from Carrie Dilworth; but he always looked back to the new clothes in the top bureau-drawer, and the day that was beginning to dawn. Then, he heard Pat's voice among the cattle at the barn; then, a stir in the kitchen under him, and presently the noise of the mill—and still it was not light enough to shave! More than ever before the sun rose; his toilet, which usually took half an hour; he combed his hair in different ways, none of which was successful; and finally down to breakfast, feeling more awkward and uncomfortable than ever before in his life.

Edbury shook hands with him and complimented him on his appearance, after which he felt more composed. The preparations for the ride to Ptolemy, nevertheless, impressed him with a certain solemnity, as if he were a culprit awaiting execution or a corpse awaiting burial. A feeling of helplessness came over him: the occasion seemed as if it had to have been determined by an omnipotent power. Presently Pat came about, not so much by his own will as by an announcement, and announced: "It will be time we're going to the happy pair to the honeymoon of two weeks in a bright blue coat of arms, fastened on pinning the 'Kase,' as she remarks, 'um so.'"

Edbury mounted his horse and rode off, in advance of the parsonage horse, to, sparkling with silk (turned, and vibrating incessantly), the ceremony was taking place in the little parlor where the ceremony was taking place, and the bedroom up-stairs, where the bride was waiting.

being arrayed under the direction of Hannah Thurston. Nothing, as she candidly confessed, enlisted her sympathies so completely as a wedding, and it was the great inconvenience of a small congregation that her husband had so few occasions to officiate.

"Promise me, Mr. Woodbury," she said, as she finally paused in her movements, from the impossibility of finding any thing else to do, "that you will be married by nobody but Mr. Waldo."

"I can safely promise that," he answered: "but pray don't ask me to fix the time when it shall take place."

"If it depended on me, I would say to-morrow. Ah, there is Bute! How nicely he looks!" With these words she went to the door and admitted him.

Bute's illness had bleached the tan and subdued the defiant ruddiness of his skin. In black broadcloth and the white silk gloves (white kids, of the proper number, were not to be found in Ptolemy) into which he had been unwillingly persuaded to force his large hands, an air of semi-refinement overspread the strong masculine expression of his face and body. His hair, thinned by fever and closely cut, revealed the shape of his well-balanced head, and the tender blue gleam in his honest eyes made them positively beautiful. Mrs. Waldo expressed her approval of his appearance, without the least reserve.

Soon afterwards, a rustling was heard on the stairs; the door opened, and Miss Carrie Dilworth entered the parlor with blushing cheeks and downcast eyes, followed by Hannah Thurston, in the white muslin dress and pearl-colored ribbons which Woodbury so well remembered. The bride was really charming in her gray, silvery silk, and a light-green wreath crowning her rippled hair. Orange-blossoms were not to be had in Ptolemy, and there were no white garden-flowers in bloom except larkspurs, which of course were not to be thought of. Hannah Thurston, therefore, persuaded her to content herself with a wreath of the myrtle-leaved box, as the

nearest approach to the conventional bridal diadem, and the effect was simple and becoming.

Each of the parties was agreeably surprised at the other's appearance. Bute, not a little embarrassed as to how he should act, took Miss Dilworth's hand, and held it in his own, deliberating whether or not it was expected that he should kiss her there. Miss Dilworth, finding that he did not let it boldly answered the pressure and clung to him with a firm and touching air of dependence and reliance. Nothing could have been more charming than the appearance of the two, as they stood together in the centre of the little room, he all man, she all woman, in the most sacred moment of life. They expressed the sweetest relation of the sexes, he yielding in his tenderness, she confiding in her trust. No declaration of mutual rights, no suspicious measurement of the words of the compact, no comparison of powers granted with powers received, but a blind, unthinking, blissful, reciprocal self-bestowal. This expression in their attitudes and faces did not escape Hannah Thurston's eye. It forced upon her mind doubts which she would willingly have avoided, but which she was only strong enough to postpone.

Paul had already slipped into the room, and stood in a corner, holding his hat in both hands. The only stranger present was Miss Sophia Stevenson, who had kindly assisted the bride in the preparation of her wardrobe, and differed from her sister spinster, Miss Ruhaney, in no good way. The fact that she was always more ready to smile than perform the simple but impressive ceremony, following it with an earnest prayer. Miss Carrie lifted up her head and pronounced the "I will" with courage, but during the prayer she bowed again so that it partly rested against Bute's shoulder. The final "Amen!" was said, Bute very gently and solemnly kissed his wife, and both were then heartily congratulated by the clergyman, who succeeded in closing his lips sufficiently to achieve the salute which an old friend might take.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DESCRIBING CERTAIN TROUBLES OF MR. WOODBURY.

WHEN they returned to Mrs. Waldo's parlor, the conversation naturally ran upon the ceremony which had just been solemnized and the two chief actors in it. There was but one judgment in regard to Bute, and his wife, also, had gained steadily in the good opinion of all ever since her betrothal beside the sick-bed.

"I had scarcely noticed her at all, before it happened," said Woodbury, "for she impressed me as a shallow, ridiculous, little creature—one of those unimportant persons who seem to have no other use than to fill up the cracks of society. But one little spark of affection gives light and color to the most insipid character. Who could have suspected the courage and earnestness of purpose which took her to Lakeside, when the fever had possession of the house? Since then I have heartily respected her. I have almost come to the conclusion that no amount of triumphant intellect is worth so much reverence as we spontaneously pay to any simple and genuine emotion, common to all human beings."

"I am glad to hear you say so!" exclaimed Mrs. Waldo. "Because then you will never fail in a proper respect to our sex. Hannah, do you remember, when you lent me Longfellow's Poems, how much I liked that line about 'affection?' I don't often quote, Mr. Woodbury, because I'm never sure of getting it exactly right; but it's this:

" 'What I esteem in woman
Is her affection, not her intellect,'

"And I believe all men of sense do."

"I cannot indorse the sentiment, precisely in those words," Woodbury answered. "I esteem *both* affection and intellect in woman, but the first quality must be predominant. Its absence in man may now and then be tolerated, but to woman it is indispensable."

"Might not woman make the same requirement of man?" Hannah Thurston suddenly asked.

"Certainly," he answered, "and with full justice. That is one point wherein no one can dispute the equal rights of the sexes. But the capacity to love is a natural quality, and there is no true affection where the parties are continually measuring their feelings to see which loves the most. Bute and his wife will be perfectly happy so long as they are satisfied with the simple knowledge of giving and receiving."

"That's exactly my idea!" cried Mrs. Waldo, in great delight. "Husband, do you recollect the promises we made to each other on our wedding-day? There's never a wedding happens but I live it all over again. We wore Navarino bonnets then, and sleeves puffed out with bags of down, and you *would* lay your head on one of them, as we drove along, just like Bute and Carrie to-day, on our way to Father Waldo's. I said then that I'd never doubt you, never take back an atom of my trust in you—and I've kept my word from that day to this, and I'll keep it in this world and the next!"

Here Mrs. Waldo actually burst into tears, but smiled through them, like the sudden rush of a stream from which spray and rainbow are born at the same instant. "I am a silly old creature," she said: "don't mind me. Half of my heart has been in Carrie's breast all morning, and I knew I should make a fool of myself before the day was out."

"You're a good wife," said Mr. Waldo, patting her on the head as if she had been a little girl.

Hannah Thurston rose, with a wild, desperate feeling in her heart. A pitiless hand seemed to clutch and crush it in her bosom. So, she thought, some half-drowned sailor, floating on the plank of a wreck, must feel when the sail that promised

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him deliverance, tacks with the wind and slides out of his horizon. The waves of life, which had hitherto only stirred for her with the grand tidal pulse which moves in their depths, now heaved threateningly and dashed their bitter salt in her face at every turn. Whence came these ominous disturbances? What was there in the happy marriage of two ignorant and contented souls, to impress her with such vague, intolerable foreboding? With the consciousness of her inability to suppress it came a feeling of angry shame at the deceitfulness of her own strength. But perhaps—and this was a gleam of hope—what she experienced was the disappointed protest of an instinct common to every human being, and which must therefore be felt and conquered by others as well.

She stole a glance at Woodbury. His face but it expressed no signs of a struggle akin to large brown eyes were veiled with the softness of a subdued longing; the full, regular lips, usually the firmness and decision of his character in junction, were slightly parted, and the corner of an expression unutterably sad. Even over her a soft, warm breath seemed to have blown. She saw that her, suddenly, under a new aspect. She saw that which the passion of a man's heart casts before away her eyes in dread of a deeper revelation. As she took leave of the tender cloud of sadness had not his hand. The tender cloud of sadness had not from his face, and she avoided meeting his gaze which was the memory of a lost, or the yearning for a temporary power to discern something of the ead mastered her. Had he done so, she never et him again. To this man, of all men, she would assert her equality. Whatever weaknesses over, he at least should only know her in her the rest of the day passed rather tamely to W

as he rode down the valley during the sweet and solemn coming-on of the twilight, he was conscious of a sensation which he had not experienced since the days of his early trials in New York. He well remembered the melancholy Sabbath evenings, when he walked along the deserted North River piers, watching the purple hills of Staten Island deepen into gray as the sunset faded—when all that he saw, the quiet vessels, the cold bosom of the bay, the dull red houses on the shores and even the dusky heaven overhead, was hollow and unreal—when there was no joy in the Present and no promise in the Future. The same hopeless chill came over him now. All the life had gone out of the landscape; its colors were cold and raw, the balmy tonic odor of the golden-rods and meadow marigolds seemed only designed to conceal some rank odor of decay, and the white front of Lakeside greeted him with the threat of a prison rather than the welcome of a home.

On the evening of the second day Bute returned, as delighted to get back as if he had made a long journey. The light of his new life still lay upon him and gave its human transfiguration to his face. Woodbury studied the change, unconsciously to its subject, with a curiosity which he had never before acknowledged in similar cases. He saw the man's supreme content in the healthy clearness of his eye, in the light, elastic movement of his limbs, and in the lively satisfaction with which he projected plans of labor, in which he was to perform the principal part. He had taken a fresh interest in life, and was all courage and activity. In Carrie, on the other hand, the trustful reliance she had exhibited appeared now to have assumed the form of a willing and happy submission. She recognized the ascendancy of sex, in her husband, without being able to discern its nature. Thus Bute's plain common-sense suddenly took the form of rough native intellect in her eyes, and confessing (to herself, only) her own deficiency, her affection was supported by the pride of her respect. Her old aunt had whispered to her, before they left Tiberius:

which he desired them to fill. In any European household such matters would have settled themselves without trouble; but in America, where the vote of the hired neutralizes that of the hirer, and both have an equal chance of reaching the Presidential chair—where the cook and chambermaid may happen to wear more costly bonnets than their mistress, and to have a livelier interest in the current fashions, it requires no little skill to harmonize the opposite features of absolute equality and actual subjection. Too great a familiarity, according to the old proverb, breeds contempt; too strict an assertion of the relative positions breeds rebellion.

The man of true cultivation, who may fraternize at will with the humblest and remotest of the human race, reserves, nevertheless, the liberty of selecting his domestic associates. Woodbury insisted on retaining his independence to this extent, not from an assumption of superiority, but from a resistance to the dictation of the uncultivated in every thing that concerned his habits of life. He would not have hesitated to partake of a meal in old Melinda's cottage, but it was always a repugnant sensation to him, on visiting the Merryfields, when an Irish laborer from the field came in his shirt-sleeves, or a strapping mulatto woman, sweating from the kitchen fire, to take their places at the tea-table. Bute's position was above that of a common laborer, and Woodbury, whose long Indian life had not accustomed him to prefer lonely to social meals, was glad to have the company of his wedded assistants at breakfast and dinner, and this became the ordinary habit; but he was careful to preserve a margin sufficient for his own freedom and convenience. Carrie, though making occasional mistakes, brought so much good-will to the work, that the housekeeping went on smoothly enough to a bachelor's eyes. If Mrs. Blake's favorable judgment had reference to this aspect of the case, she was sufficiently near the truth, but in another respect she certainly made a great mistake.

It was some days before Woodbury would confess to himself the disturbance which the new household, though so co-

as the imaginary jealousy of a new landed proprietor, who presents to himself the idea of ownership in every possible form in order to enjoy it the more thoroughly. Lake-side was his, to the smallest stone inside his boundary fence, and the mossiest shingle on the barn-roof; but the old house—the vital heart of the property—now belonged more to others than to himself. The dead had signed away their interest in its warmth and shelter, but it was haunted in every chamber by the ghosts of the living. The new-made husband and wife filled it with a feeling of home, in which he had no part. They had usurped his right, and stolen the comfort which ought to belong to him alone. It was *their* house, and he the tenant. As he rode down the valley, in the evenings, and from the bridge over Roaring Brook glanced across the meadows to the sunny knoll, the love, which was not his own, looked at him from the windows glimmering in the sunset and seemed to say: “You would not ask me to be your guest, but I am here in spite of you!”

Woodbury, however, though his nature was softened by the charm of a healthy sentiment, was not usually imaginative. He was not the man to endure, for any length of time, a mental or moral unrest, without attempting to solve it. His natural powers of perception, his correct instincts, his calm judgment, and his acquired knowledge of life, enabled him to interpret himself as well as others. He never shrank from any revelation which his own heart might make to him. If a wound smarted, he thrust the probe to the bottom with a steady hand. The pain was none the less, afterwards, perhaps, but he could estimate when it would heal. He possessed, moreover, the virtue, so often mistaken for egotism, of revering in himself the aspirations, the sacrifices, and the sanctities which he revered in other men. Understanding, correctly, his nature as a man, his perceptions were not easily confused. There are persons whose moral nature is permanently unhinged by the least license: there are others who may be led, by circumstance, into far graver aberrations, and then swing back, without

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effort, to their former integrity. He belonged to the latter class.

It was not long, therefore, before he had surveyed the whole ground of his disturbance. Sitting, late into the night, in his library, he would lay down his book beside the joss-stick which smouldered away into a rod of white ash, and quietly deliberate upon his position. He recalled every sensation of annoyance or impatience, not disguising its injury to himself or concealing from himself its inherent selfishness, while on the other hand he admitted the powerful source from which it sprang. He laid no particular blame to his nature, but reproached himself by the fact that it obeyed a universal law, and deceived himself by the promise of resistance. Half the distress of the race is caused by their fighting battles which can never be decided. Woodbury's knowledge simply taught him how to conceal his troubles, and that was all he desired. He knew that the ghost which entered Lakeside must stay there until he should enter another ghost to dislodge it.

Where was the sweet phantom to be found? If, in some quiet moment, he almost envied Bute the possession of the peaceful, confiding, insipid creature, in whom the former was so much content, his good sense told him, the nearer he approached the mere capacity to love was not enough for the life. That which is the consecration of marriage does not constitute marriage. Of all the women whom he could offer him the true reciprocal gift was none. He acknowledged himself to be drawn by an interest greater than that of intellect—an interest which he allowed it, into love. The more he saw of her, the more he admired her to be. He had come to look upon her gentle pity, which taught him to avoid assault, as the manner in which she claimed delusive specially for herself, but for all her sex—thenceforth as a champion of those rights, or was

gral part of herself? This was the one important question which it behooved him to solve. To what extent was the false nature superimposed upon the true woman beneath it?

Supposing, even, that he should come to love her, and, improbable as it might seem, should awaken an answering love in her heart, would she unite her fate, *unconditionally*, to his? Would she not demand, in advance, security for some unheard-of domestic liberty, as a partial compensation for the legal rights which were still withheld? One of her fellow-championesses had recently married, and had insisted on retaining her maiden name. He had read, in the newspapers, a contract drawn up and signed by the two, which had disgusted him by its cold business character. He shuddered at the idea of Hannah Thurston presenting a similar contract for his signature, crossed his mind. "No!" he cried, starting up: "it is incredible!" Nothing in all his intercourse with her suggested such a suspicion. Even in the grave dignity of her manner she was entirely woman. The occasional harshness of judgment or strength of prejudice which repelled him, were faults, indeed, but faults that would melt away in the light of a better knowledge of herself. She was at present in a position of fancied antagonism, perhaps not wholly by her own action. The few men who agreed with her gave her false ideas of their own sex: the others whom she knew misunderstood and misrepresented her. She thus stood alone, bearing the burden of aspirations, which, however extravagant, were splendidly earnest and unselfish.

Mrs. Blake's words came back to Woodbury's memory and awakened a vague confidence in his own hopes. She was too clear-eyed a woman to be easily mistaken in regard to one of her sex. Her bantering proposition might have been intended to convey a serious counsel. "A strong woman can only be overcome by superior strength." But how should this strength (supposing he possessed it) be exercised? Should he crush her masculine claims under a weight of argument? Impossible: if she were to be convinced at all, it must be by the

knowledge that comes through love. There was another form of strength, he thought—a conquering magnetism of presence, a force of longing which supplants will, a warmth of passion which disarms resistance—but such strength, again, is simply Love, and *he* must love before he could exercise it. The question, therefore, was at last narrowed to this: should he cherish the interest he already felt until it grew to the passion he prefigured, and leave to fate its return, free as became a woman or fettered with suspicious provisions?

This, however, was a question not so easy to decide. Were he sure of exciting a reciprocal interest, the venture, he felt, would be justified to his own heart; but nothing in her manner led him to suspect that she more than tolerated him—in distinction to her former hostile attitude—and there is no man of gentle nature but shrinks from the possibility of a failure. “Ah,” said he, “I am not so young as I thought. A young man would not stop to consider, and doubt, and weigh probabilities. If I fail, my secret is in sacred keeping; if I win, I must win every thing. Am I not trying to keep up a youthful faculty of self-illusion which is lost forever, by demanding an ideal perfection in woman? No, no! I must cease to cheat myself: I must not demand a warmer flame than I can give.”

Sometimes he attempted to thrust the subject from his mind. The deliberations in which he had indulged him cold, material, and unworthy the sanction of love. It had the effect, however, of making Hannah Thurston’s familiar an abiding guest in his thoughts, and the very familiarity of his own doubts rendered them less formidable than before. The life crowned with the bliss he passionately desired was not so farward the trial. If it failed, his future could not be so barren and lonely than it now loomed before him. How lonely, every sight of Bute’s face constantly reminded him.

The end of it all was a determination to court a friendly intimacy with Thurston’s society—to court a friendly intimacy should not allow his heart to be compromised might go with safety to himself, and in no case

his views, could there be danger to her. His acquaintance with the widow, which had been kept up by an occasional brief visit, and the present condition of the latter's health, gave him all the opportunity he needed. The Catawba grapes were already ripening on the trellises at Lakeside, and he would take the earliest bunches to the widow's cottage.

The impression, in Ptolemy society, of a strong antagonism between himself and Hannah Thurston, was very general. Even Mrs. Waldo, whose opportunities of seeing both were best of all, fancied that their more cordial demeanor towards each other, in their later interviews, was only a tacitly understood armistice. Woodbury was aware of this impression, and determined not to contradict it for the present.

Thus, tormented from without and within, impelled by an outery of his nature that would not be silenced, without consciousness of love, he took the first step, knowing that it might lead him to love a woman whose ideas were repugnant to all his dreams of marriage and of domestic peace.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH HANNAH THURSTON, ALSO, HAS HER TROUBLES.

WHEN Woodbury made his first appearance at the cottage, the Widow Thurston, who had not seen him since his return from the Lakes, frankly expressed her pleasure in his society. It was one of her favorable days, and she was sitting in her well-cushioned rocking-chair, with her feet upon a stool. She had grown frightfully thin and pale during the summer, the lines of physical pain had almost entirely passed from her face. Her expression denoted great weakness, languor. The calm, resigned spirit which reigned in her was only troubled, at times, when they rested on her. She had concealed from the latter, as much as possible, the swiftness with which her vital force was diminished. She knew that the end was approaching, and she acknowledged it should increase the care and anxiety which was telling upon her health. She knew that the end was near, she could measure its approach, and she acknowledged heart how welcome it would be, but for her daughter. "It's very kind of thee to come, Friend Woodbury," said he, "but I ought to have come sooner," said he, "but she. "I've been expecting thee before."

"I ought to have come sooner," said he, "but been changes at Lakeside."

"Yes, I know. The two guests that will not have come to thy home, as they come to the home. We must be ready for either. The Lord sends them."

"Yes," said Woodbury, with a sigh, "but one long in coming to me." The sweet serenity and old woman's words evoked a true reply. All that came from a heart too sincere for disguise, and

a subtle warmth seemed to radiate from him. Before, his words had excited her intellect: now, they addressed themselves to her feelings. As the conversation advanced, she recovered her usual animation, yet still preserved the purely feminine character which he had addressed in her. The positions which they had previously occupied were temporarily forgotten, and at parting each vaguely felt the existence of unsuspected qualities in the other.

During this first visit, Hannah Thurston in reserve, in the satisfaction which it gave to her. She always found it far more agreeable to like than to dislike. Woodbury's lack of that enthusiasm which in her soul was an ever-burning and mounting fire—his cold, dispassionate power of judgment—his tolerance of what she considered habits of the most reprehensible character, and his indifference to those wants and wrongs of the race which continued to the Reformer's aid, had at first given her the impression that the basis of his character was hard and selfish. She had since modified this view, granting him the high station of truth and charity; she had witnessed the manifold ability still preserved a cold, statuesque beauty. His individuality over his affections. His mastery over his passions and his intellectual passions and his seemed to him rational and convenient. m so :

His words to her mother recalled to her mind, and she not why, the description of her own father's death. It was possible that an equal capacity for passion might have been hidden under a cold, immovable manner. She had seen tolerably well, the natures of the men of whom she had most, during the past six or eight years, and had seen the most, during the past six or eight years, and had seen their own unreserved protestations of feeling were the of their capacity to feel. There was no necessity, they throw a plummet into their streams, for they had set up their own Nilometers, and the depth of was indicated at the surface. She began to suspect,

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throes of an earthquake. When she recalled her past for the sacred cause of Woman, a mocking demon now en whispered to her that even in good times there were the of harm, and that she had estimated, in vanity, the fruits of ministry. "God give me strength!" she whispered— strength to conquer doubt, strength to keep the truth for I have lived and which must soon be my only life, th to rise out of a shameful weakness' which I cannot stand!"

When, ere she slept, a hope to which she desperately clung, to smooth her uneasy pillow. Her own future life must from her present. The hour was not far off, she knew, her quiet years in the cottage must come to an end. could not shut her eyes to the fact that her mother's time with was short; and short as it was, she would not cloud anxiety for the lonely existence beyond it. He resolute—ust her own future from her mind, but it was nevertheless s present in a vague, hovering form. The uncertainty of te, she now thought,—the dread anticipation of coming w—had shaken and unnerved her. No doubt but her old, ast self-reliance and self-confidence would assert them, after the period of trial had been passed. She must only patience, for the doubts which she could not now answer d then surely be solved. With this consolation at her which sh —with a determination to possess patience, ss herself c much more easy than the attempt to possess the refreshin she would close her aching eyes and court the on of sleep.

But sleep did not always come at her call. That idea of a sad, solitary future, so near at hand, would not be exo . If she repelled it, it came back again in company with all more terrible ghost of the Past—her early but no less dream of love. When she tried to call the at dream sion, all the forces of her nature gave her the lie—all th s of her heart, trembling in divinest harmony under th h of the tormenting angel, betrayed her, despairingly,

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winding stream, to the sweet breath of the scented grass, and the tangled thickets of alder, over which bitter-sweet and clematis ran riot and strove for the monopoly of support. Here, all her vague mental troubles died away like the memory of an oppressive dream; she drew resignation from every aspect of Nature, and confidence in herself from the crowding associations of the Past which the landscape inspired. Mrs. Waldo, of course, soon became aware of Woodbury's frequent visits. He had made no secret of them, as he always called at the Parsonage at the same time, and she had shared equally the ripening vintage of Lakeside. But he had spoken more of the Widow Thurston than of her daughter, and the former had been equally free in expressing her pleasure at his visits, so that Mrs. Waldo never doubted the continuance of the old antagonism between Hannah and Woodbury. The reciprocal silence in relation to each other confirmed her supposition. She was sincerely vexed at a dislike which seemed not only unreasonable, but unnatural, and grieved at the delayed conciliation that she finally spoke of on the subject.

"Well, Hannah," she said, one day, when Woodbury had been incidentally mentioned, "I really think it is you and he should practise a little charity towards each other. I've been waiting, and waiting, to see your patience wear away, now that you know him better. I think how it worries me that two of my best friends are so right and sensible in all other acts of the best of them, and yet so stubbornly set against each other. Does he think I am stubbornly set against him? Hannah Thurston cried, the warm color mounting to her cheeks. "Not he! He says nothing about you, and that's the best of it. You say nothing about him, either. But anybody who has opened my mouth, but I love you so dearly, Hannah, I am, too, as a dear friend—and I can't for the life of me."

be just, she had totally forgotten what her treatment of Seth Wattles, from a similar impulse, had brought upon her. She only saw, in Woodbury's face, the grateful recognition of her manner towards him, and her conscience became quiet at once. The key-note struck at greeting gave its character to the interview, which Woodbury prolonged much beyond his usual habit. He had never been so attractive, but at the same time, his presence had never before caused her such vague alarm. All the cold indifference, which she had once imagined to be his predominant characteristic, had melted like a snow-wreath in the sunshine: a soft, warm, pliant grace diffused itself over his features and form, and a happy under-current of feeling made itself heard in his lightest words. He drew her genuine self to the light, before she suspected how much she had allowed him to see: she, who had resolved that he should only know her in her strength, had made a voluntary confession of her weakness!

Hannah Thurston was proud as she was pure, and this weird and dangerous power in the man, wounded as well as disturbed her. She felt sure that he exercised it unconsciously, and therefore he was not to be blamed; but it assailed her individual freedom—her coveted independence of other minds—none the less. It was weakness to shrink from the encounter: it was humiliation to acknowledge, as she must, that her powers of resistance diminished with each attack.

Woodbury rode home that evening very slowly. For the first time since Bute's marriage, as he looked across the meadows to a dusky white speck that glimmered from the knoll in the darkening twilight, there was no pang at his heart. "I foresee," he said to himself, "that if I do not take care, I shall love this girl madly and passionately. I know her now in her true tenderness and purity; I see what a wealth of womanhood is hidden under her mistaken aims. But is she not too loftily pure—too ideal in her aspirations—for my winning? Can she bear the knowledge of my life? I cannot spare her the test. If she comes to me at last, it must be with eveey

trust. It was certainly a wonderful coincidence that, as he walked into Ptolemy on a golden afternoon in late September, quite uncertain whether he should this time call at the widow's cottage, he should meet Hannah Thurston on foot, just at the junction of the Anacreon and Mulligansville highways. It was Miss Sophia Stevenson's day for relieving her, and she had gone out for her accustomed walk up the banks of the stream.

As Woodbury lifted his hat to greet her, his face brightened with a pleasure which he did not now care to conceal. There was a hearty, confiding warmth in the grasp of his hand, as he stood face to face, looking into her clear, dark-gray eyes with an expression as frank and unembarrassed as a boy's. It was this transparent warmth and frankness which swept away her cautious resolves at a touch. In spite of herself, she felt that an intimate friendship was fast growing up between them, and she knew not why the consciousness of it should make her so uneasy. There was surely no reproach to her in the fact that their ideas and habits were so different; there was none of her friends with whom she did not differ on points more or less important. The current setting towards her was pure and crystal-clear, yet she drew back from it as from the rush of a dark and turbid torrent.

"Well-met!" cried Woodbury, with a familiar playfulness. "We are both of one mind to-day, and what a day for out-of-doors! I am glad you are able to possess a part of it; your mother is better, I hope?"

"She is much as usual, and I should not have left her, but for the kindness of a friend who comes regularly on this day of the week to take my place for an hour or two."

"Have you this relief but *once* in seven days?"

"Oh, no. Mrs. Styles comes on Tuesdays, and those two days, I find, are sufficient for my needs. Mrs. Waldo would relieve me every afternoon if I would allow her."

"If you are half as little inclined for lonely walks as I am," said Woodbury, "you will not refuse my companionship to-day. I see you are going out the eastern road."

MANNAH THURSTON :

times: you cannot help it, with such an

accompani-

e did not answer, but a fitting smile betraye

took their seats on the log, as if by a, silent

The liquid gossip of the stream, in which

ed to mingle in shades of tone so delicate

as soon as it caught them, sounded lullingly

and then a golden leaf dropped from the

and quivered slantwise to the ground.

Ah, that reminds me," said Woodbury, fin

peaceful, entrancing silence—"one of those ex-

The Princess' came into my head. Have y

? You promised to tell me what impres

you."

Your judgment is correct, so far," she ans

etry, not argument. But it could never h

y one who believes in the just rights of w

place, the Princess has a very faulty view

in the second place she adopts a plan to sec

irely impracticable. If the book had be

us purpose, I should have been disappoint

what it is, it has given me very great pl

You say the Princess's plan of educating

ence is impracticable; yet—pardon me if

you—you seem to attribute your subje

of man—an influence which must contin

power it ever has. What plan would

"

do not know," she answered, hesitati

and believe that the Truth must fina

e never aimed at any thing more than t

Then you do not place yourself in an

" he asked.

annah Thurston was embarrassed for

ness conquered. "I fear, indeed, tha

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assert it."

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moment, but her

I have done so,"

a cruel attack has

driven me to resistance. You can scarcely appreciate our position, Mr. Woodbury. We could bear open and honorable hostility, but the conventionalities which protect us against that offer us no defence from sneers and ridicule. The very term applied to us—'strong-minded'—implies that weak minds are our natural and appropriate inheritance. It is in human nature, I think, to forgive honest enmity sooner than covert contempt."

"Would it satisfy you that the sincerity and unselfishness of your aims are honored, though the aims themselves are accounted mistaken?"

"It is all we could ask now!" she exclaimed, her eyes growing darker and brighter, and her voice thrilling with its earnest sweetness. "But who would give us that much?"

"I would," said Woodbury, quietly. "Will you pardon me for saying that it has seemed to me, until recently, as if you suspected me of an active hostility which I have really never felt. My opinions are the result of my experience of men, and you cannot wonder if they differ from yours. I should be very wrong to arrogate to myself any natural superiority over you. I think there never can be any difficulty in determining the relative rights of the sexes, when they truly understand and respect each other. I can unite with you in desiring reciprocal knowledge and reciprocal honor. If that shall be attained, will you trust to the result?"

"Forgive me: I *did* misunderstand you," she said, not answering his last question.

A pause ensued. The stream gurgled on, and the purple hills smiled through the gaps in the autumnal foliage. "Do you believe that Ida was happier with the Prince, supposing he were faithful to the picture he drew, than if she had remained at the head of her college?" he suddenly asked.

"You will acquit me of hostility to your sex when I say 'Yes.' The Prince promised her equality, not subjection. It is sad that the noble and eloquent close of the poem should be its most imaginative part."

The tone of mournful unbelief in her voice fired blood. His heart protested against her words and to be heard. The deepening intimacy of their talk led him to that verge of frankness where the sanctities which hide themselves from the gaze of the world are brought into the light and boldly reveal their features. "No," he said earnestly, "the picture is not imaginative. It exists in the heart of every true man. There is no ideal perfection in marriage because there is no man who can, and should, embody the tenderest affection, the divinest charity, and the purest faith. Human nature is capable of manifesting. I, for one man, have found my own dream in the words of the Prince. I have not remained unmarried from a selfish idea of independence or from a want of reverence for woman. Because I hold her so high, because I seek to set her side by side with me in love and duty and confidence, I cannot profane her and myself by an imperfect union. I do not understand love without the most absolute mutual knowledge, and a trust so complete that there can be no question of rights on either side. Where that is given, man will never withhold, nor will woman demand, what she should not possess. That is my dream of marriage, and it is not a dream too high for attainment in this life!"

The sight of Hannah Thurston's face compelled him to pause. She was deadly pale, and trembled visibly. The moment he ceased speaking, she rose from her seat, and, mechanically plucking some twigs of the berries, carried bittersweet to her lips.

Woodbury had not intended to say so much, and was full, at first, that his impassioned manner had suggested a secret he still determined to hide. In that case, she evidently desired to escape its utterance, but he had a presentiment that he had awakened the memory of some cause. Could it be that he had awakened the memory of some experience of first jealous doubt through which she had passed? After the self to his mind which this thought inspired, it presented it

a relief. The duty which pressed upon him would be more lightly performed; the test to which he must first subject her would be surer of success.

As they threaded the embowered paths on their homeward way, he said to her, gravely, but cheerfully: "You see, Miss Thurston, your doubt of my sex has forced me to show myself to you as I am, in one respect. But I will not regret the confession, unless you should think it intrusive."

"Believe me," she answered, "I know how to value it. You have made me ashamed of my unbelief."

"And you have confirmed me in my belief. This is a subject which neither man nor woman can rightly interpret, alone. Why should we never speak of that which is most vital in our lives? Here, indeed, we are governed by conventional ideas, springing from a want of truth and purity. But a man is always ennobled by allowing a noble woman to look into his heart. Do you recollect my story about the help Mrs. Blake gave me, under awkward circumstances, before her marriage?"

"Perfectly. It was that story which made me wish to know her. What an admirable woman she is!"

"Admirable, indeed!" Woodbury exclaimed. "That was not the only, nor the best help she gave me. I learned from her that women, when they are capable of friendship—don't misunderstand me, I should say the same thing of men—are the most devoted friends in the world. She is the only consoling figure in an episode of my life which had a great influence upon my fate. The story is long since at an end, but I should like to tell it to you, some time."

"If you are willing to do so, I shall be glad to hear another instance of Mrs. Blake's kindness."

"Not only that," Woodbury continued, "but still another portion of my history. I will not press my confidence upon you, but I shall be glad, very glad, if you will kindly consent to receive it. Some things in my life suggest questions which I have tried to answer, and cannot. I must have a woman's

p. I know you are all truth and candor, and I am willing to place my doubts in your hands."

He spoke earnestly and eagerly, walking by her side with eyes fixed upon the ground. His words produced a feeling of interest and curiosity, under which lurked a singular reluctance. She was still unnerved by her agitation. "Why should you place such confidence in me at length faltered. "You have other friends who would be better."

"We cannot always explain our instincts," he said, "I must tell you, and you alone. If I am to have these doubts, it is you who can give it."

His words seized her and held her powerless. Her good still acknowledged the authority of those impulses which are truer than reason, because they come from a deeper source. He spoke with a conviction that there was no appeal, and the words of refusal vanished from her lips and from her heart.

"Tell me, then," she said. "I will do my best to be able to help you."

He took her hand and held it a moment, with a warm smile. "God bless you!" was all he said.

They silently returned up the road. On reaching the cottage, he took leave of her, saying: "You will tell me your story to-morrow." His face was earnest and denoted the presence of a mystery, the character of which he could not surmise.

On entering the cottage, she first went up-stairs to her room. She had a sensation of some strange expression over her face, which must be banished from it before she could meet her mother. She must have five minutes to think upon what had passed, before she could temporarily away from her mind. But her thoughts were anxious, through which only two palpable sensations came as they moved to and fro—one of unreasonable and equally unreasoning terror. What either of the

ed she could not guess. She only felt that there was no stable point to which she could cling, but the very base of her being seemed to shift as her thoughts pierced down to it.

Her eyes fell upon the volume of "The Princess," which lay upon the little table beside her bed. She took it up with a sudden desire to read again the closing scene, where the heroine lays her masculine ambition in the hands of love. The book opened of itself, at another page: the first words arrested her eye and she read, involuntarily :

"Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea,
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold on fold, of mountain and of cape,
But oh, too fond, when have I answered thee?
Ask me no more

"Ask me no more: what answer could I give?
I love not hollow cheek and fading eye,
Yet oh, my friend, I would not have thee die:
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

"Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are sealed.
I strove against the stream, and strove in vain:
Let the great river bear me to the main!
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield—
Ask me no more."

The weird, uncontrollable power which had taken possession of her reached its climax. She threw down the book and burst into tears.

diverging on the brink of a plunge which I have determined to make, or to postpone it, from the fear that the venture of confidence which I now send out will come to shipwreck. Since I have learned to appreciate the truth and nobleness of our nature—since I have dared to hope that you honor me with a friendly regard—most of all, since I find that the feelings which I recognize as the most intimate and sacred portion of myself seek expression in your presence, I am forced to make you a participant in the knowledge of my life. Whether be that melancholy knowledge which a tender human charity takes under its protecting wing and which thenceforward keeps calmly in some shadowy corner of memory, or that evil knowledge which torments because it cannot be forgotten, I am not able to foresee. I will say nothing, in advance, to procure a single feeling of sympathy or consideration which our own nature would not spontaneously prompt you to give. I know that in this step I may not be acting the part of a friend; but, whatever consequences may follow it, I entreat you to believe that there is no trouble which I would not voluntarily take upon myself, rather than inflict upon you a moment's unnecessary pain.

“Have you ever, in some impartial scrutiny of self, discovered to what extent your views of Woman, and your aspirations in her behalf, were drawn from your own nature? Are you not inclined to listen to your own voice as if it were the collective voice of your sex? If so, you may to some extent, accept me as an interpretation of Man. I am neither better nor worse than the general average of men. My principal advantages are, that I was most carefully and judiciously educated, and that my opportunities of knowing mankind have been greater than is usual. A conscientious study of human nature ought to be the basis of all theories of reform. I think you will agree with me, thus far; and therefore, however my present confession may change your future relations towards me, I shall have, at least, the partial consolation of knowing that I have added something to your knowledge.

HANNAH THURSTON:

ne add only this, before I commence my narrative—
ats entirely of the occurrences of my life, which have
me near to woman through my emotions. It is my
ce of the sex, so far as that experience has taken a
hold on my heart. You are not so cold and unsympa-
s to repel the subject. The instinct which has led me
se you as the recipient of my confidence cannot be
That same instinct tells me that I shall neither withhold
ek to extenuate whatever directly concerns myself. I
not do either.

ly nature was once not so calm and self-subdued as it
seem to you now. As a youth I was ardent, impetuous,
easily controlled by my feelings. In the heart of almost
boy, from seventeen to twenty, there is a train laid, and
ting for the match. As I approached the latter age, mine
s kindled by a girl two years younger than myself, the
ughter of a friend of my father. I suppose all early passions
ve very much the same character: they are intense, absorb-
g, unreasoning, but generally shallow, not from want of sin-
erity but from want of development. The mutual attachment
ecessarily showed itself, and was tacitly permitted, but with-
out any express engagement. I had never surprised her with
any sudden declaration of love: our relation had gradual-
grown into existence, and we were both so happy therein th
we did not need to question and discuss our feelings. In fac
we were rarely sufficiently alone to have allowed of such co-
fidences; but we sought each other in society or in our
pective family circles and created for ourselves a half-private
in the presence of others. Nothing seemed more certain
either of us than that our fates were already united, for w
accepted the tolerance of our attachment as a sanction of it
future seal upon our lives.

“After my father’s failure and death, however, I discovered
with bitterness of heart, that it was not alone my pecuniar-
prospects which had changed. Her father, a shrewd, hard-
man of business, was one of the very few who prospered in

season of general ruin—who perhaps foresaw the crash and prepared himself to take advantage of the splendid opportunities which it offered. His wealth was doubled, probably trebled, in a year: he won advantages which compelled the most exclusive circles to receive him, and his family dropped their old associations as fast as they familiarized themselves with the new. I saw this change, at first, without the slightest misgiving: my faith in human nature was warm and fresh, and the satisfied bliss of my affections disposed me to judge all men kindly. I only refrained from asking the father's assistance in my straits, from a feeling of delicacy, not because I had any suspicion that it would not be given. Little by little, however, the conviction forced itself upon my mind that I was no longer a welcome visitor at the house: I was dropped from the list of guests invited to dinners and entertainments, and my reception became cold and constrained. From the sadness and uneasiness on the face of my beloved, I saw that she was suffering for my sake, and on questioning her she did not deny that she had been urged to give me up. She assured me, nevertheless, of her own constancy, and exhorted me to have patience until my prospects should improve.

"It was at this juncture that Miss Remington (Mrs. Blake, you will remember) became a comforting angel to both of us. She had remarked our attachment from its first stage, and with her profound scorn of the pretensions of wealth, she determined to assist the course of true love. We met, as if by accident, at her father's house, and she generally contrived that we should have a few minutes alone. Thus, several months passed away. My position had not advanced, because I had every thing to learn when I first took it, but I began to have more confidence in myself, and remained cheerful and hopeful. I was not disturbed by the fact that my beloved sometimes failed to keep her appointments, but I could not help remarking, now, that when she did appear, she seemed ill at ease and strove to make the interviews as short as possible.

"There was something in Miss Remington's manner, also,

which I could not understand. I missed the fraternal sympathy with faithful and persecuted love, which had been given me. A restless anxiety, pointing to one thing and another, but never towards the truth, took possession of me. One day on making my pre-arranged call, I found Miss Remington alone. Her face was grave and sad. She saved me from disappointment: she allowed me to walk impatiently down the room three or four times, then she arose and took me by both hands. 'Am I mistaken in you?' she asked. 'Are you yet a man?' 'I am trying to prove it,' I answered. 'Then,' she said, 'prove it to me. If you were to have a tooth drawn, would you turn back a dozen times to look at the dentist's door and bear the ache a day longer, or would you go in at once and have it out?' I sat down, and said, desperately: 'I am ready for any trial!' She smiled, but there were tears of pity in her eyes. She told me as kindly and tenderly as possible, what she had learned: that the girl who possessed my unquested love was unworthy of the gift: that the splendors of the life into which she had ascended had become indispensable to her; that her attachment to me was now a simple emotion; that her beauty had attracted wealthy admirers, of whom she was a shallow-brained egotist, was reported to be especially fond of her, and that any hope I might have of her coming to me must be uprooted as a delusion.

"I tried to reject this revelation, but the truth was too clear to be discredited. Nevertheless, I insisted on seeing the girl once more, and Miss Remington brought me for an interview. I was too deeply disappointed to be able to leave, as she showed a restless impatience to be gone, as if some urgent matter of conscience still spoke in her heart. I thought that I saw she was changed. If her attachment to me had faded, as I feared, I would not despotically press her, but would release her from the mockery of a promise which her heart no longer acknowledged. I expected her confession of the truth, in return, and was then

unprepared for the angry reproaches she heaped upon me. 'Very fine!' she cried; 'I always thought there was no *suspicion* where there was love! I am to be accused of falsehood, from a jealous whim. It's very easy for you to give up an attachment that died out long ago!' But I will not repeat her expressions further. I should never have comprehended them without Miss Remington's assistance. She was vexed that I should have discovered her want of faith and given her back her freedom: *she* should have been the first to break the bonds. I laughed, in bitterness of heart, at her words; I could give her no other answer.

"The shock my affections received was deeper than I cared to show. It was renewed, when, three months afterwards, the faithless girl married the rich fool whom she had preferred to me. I should have become moody and cynical but for the admirable tact with which Miss Remington, in her perfect friendship, softened the blow. Many persons suppose that a pure and exalted relation of this kind cannot exist between man and woman, without growing into love—in other words, that friendship seeks its fulfilment in the same sex and love in the opposite. I do not agree with this view. The thought of loving Julia Remington never entered my mind, and she would have considered me as wanting in sanity if I had intimated such a thing, but there was a happy and perfect confidence between us, which was my chief support in those days of misery.

"I accepted, eagerly, the proposition to become the Calcutta agent of the mercantile house in which I was employed. The shadow of my disappointment still hung over me, and there were now but few associations of my life in New York to make the parting difficult. I went, and in the excitement of new scenes, in the absorbing duties of my new situation, in the more masculine strength that came with maturity, I gradually forgot the blow which had been struck—or, if I did not forget, the sight of the scar no longer recalled the pain of the wound. Nevertheless, it had made me suspicious and fearful.

questioned every rising inclination of my heart, and suppressed the whispers of incipient affection, determined that no woman should ever again deceive me as the first had done. The years glided away, one by one; I had slowly acquired the habit of self-control, on which I relied as a natural and sufficient guard for my heart, and the longing for woman's partnership in life, which no man can ever wholly suppress, again began to make itself heard. I did not expect a recurrence of the passion of youth. I knew that I had changed, and that love, therefore, must come to me in a different form. I remembered what I heard at home, as a boy, that when the original forest was cleared away, a new forest of different trees is developed from the naked soil. But I still suspected that there must be a family likeness in the growth, and that I should recognize its sprouting germs.

"Between five and six years ago, it was necessary that I should visit Europe, in the interest of the house. I was absent from India nearly a year, and during that time made my first acquaintance with Switzerland, the memory of which is now indissolubly connected, in my mind, with that song which I have heard you sing. But it is not of this that I would speak. I find myself shrinking from the new revelation which must be made. The story is not one of guilt—not even of serious blame, in the eyes of the world. If it were necessary I could tell it to any man, without reluctance for my own sake. Men, in certain respects, have broader and truer views of life than women; they are more tender in their judgment, more guarded in their condemnation. I am not justifying myself in advance, for I can acquit myself of any intentional wrong. I only feel that the venture, embodied in my confession, is about to be sent forth—either to pitying gales that shall waft it safely back to me, or to storms in which it shall go down. Recollect dear Miss Thurston, that whatever of strength I may possess you have seen. I am now about to show you, voluntarily,

"Among the passengers on board the steamer

by which

HANNAH THURSTON :

ful towards her. Poor woman! if she had ever
of love the dream had been forgotten. She was ig-
the fatal spell which had come upon us, and I did
ect my own passion until its reflection was thrown
me from her innocent face. When I had discovered
happiness,
th, it was too late—too late, I mean, for her
o her a danger which she did not suspect, nor could I
ter; by an enforced coldness, her few remain- ing happy
of our voyage. With a horrible fascinat- ing I saw her
ving nearer and nearer the brink of knowl- ge, and my
were sealed, that only could have uttered the warning cry.
Again I was called upon to suffer, but in a way I had
ver anticipated. The grief of betrayed love is tame, beside
e despair of forbidden love. This new experience showed
ne how light was the load which I had already borne. On
the one side, two hearts that recognized each other and would
have been faithful to the end of time; on the other, a mon-
strous bond, which had only the sanction of hu- man laws.
rebelled, in my very soul, against the mocker- y of that leg-
marriage, which is the basis of social virtue, et her which h
Good must voluntarily bind itself in order tha- could not ev
go free. The boundless tenderness towards pulse should h
suddenly revealed itself must be stifled. I eyes, lest mi
press her hand warmly, lest some unguarded and my sorro
tray the secret; I scarcely dared look in her
might stab her with the sharpness of my love
in the same glance.

"It was all in vain. Some glance, some word, or touch o
hand, on either side, *did* come, and the thin disguise wa
torn away forever. Then we spoke, for the consolation o
speech seemed less guilty than the agony of silence. In the
moonless nights of the Indian Ocean we walked the deck with
hands secretly clasped, with silent tears on our cheeks, with
a pang in our souls only softened by the knowledge that it
was mutual. Neither of us, I think, then thought of disputing

our fate. But as the voyage drew near its end, I was haunted by wild fancies of escape. I could not subdue my nature to forego a fulfilment that seemed possible. We might find a refuge, I thought, in Java, or Celebes, or some of the Indian Isles, and once beyond the reach of pursuit what was the rest of the world to us? What was wealth, or name, or station?—they were hollow sounds to us now, they were selfish cheats, always. In the perverted logic of passion all was clear and fair.

"This idea so grew upon me that I was base enough to propose it to her—I who should have given reverence to that ignorance of the heart which made her love doubly sacred, strove to turn it into the instrument of her ruin! She heard me, in fear, not in indignation. 'Do not tempt me!' she cried, with a pitiful supplication; 'think of my children, and help me to stand up against my own heart!' Thank God I was not deaf to that cry of weakness; I was armed to meet resistance, but I was powerless against her own despairing fear of surrender. Thank God, I overcame the relentless selfishness of my sex! She took from my lips, that night, the only kiss I ever gave her—the kiss of repentance, not of triumph. It left no stain on the purity of her marriage vow. That was our true parting from each other. There were still two days of our voyage left, but we looked at each other as if through the bars of opposite prisons, with a double wall between. Our renunciation was complete, and any further words would have been an unnecessary pang. We had a melancholy pleasure in still being near each other, in walking side by side, in the formal touch of hands that dared not clasp and be clasped. This poor consolation soon ceased. The husband was waiting for her at Calcutta, and I purposely kept my state-room when we arrived, in order that I might not see him. I was not yet sure of myself.

"She went to Benares, and afterwards to Meerut, and I never saw her again. In a little more than a year I heard she was dead: 'the fever of the country,' they said. I was glad

of it—death was better for her than her life had been—now, at least, when that life had become a perpetual infidelity to her heart. Death purified the memory of my passion, and gave me, perhaps, a sweeter resignation than if she had first yielded to my madness. Sad and hopeless as was this episode of my life, it contained an element of comfort, and restored the balance which my first disappointment had destroyed. My grief for her was gentle, tender and consoling, and I never turned aside from its approaches. It has now withdrawn into the past, but its influence still remains, in this—that the desire for that fulfilment of passion, of which life has thus far cheated me, has not grown cold in my heart.

“There are some natures which resemble those plants that die after a single blossoming—natures in which one passion seems to exhaust the capacities for affection. I am not one of them, yet I know that I possess the virtue of fidelity. I know that I still wait for the fortune that shall enable me to manifest it. Do you, as a woman, judge me unworthy to expect that fortune? You are now acquainted with my history; try me by the sacred instincts of your own nature, and according to them, pardon or condemn me. I have revealed to you my dream of the true marriage that is possible—a dream that prevents me from stooping to a union not hallowed by perfect love and faith. Have I forfeited the right to indulge in this dream longer? Would I be guilty of treason towards the virgin confidence of some noble woman whom God may yet send me, in offering her a heart which is not fresh in its knowledge, though fresh in its immortal desires? I pray you to answer me these questions? Do not blame your own truth and nobility of nature, which have brought you this task. Blame me, if you please, for selfishness in taking advantage of them.

“I have now told you all I meant to confess, and might have closed. But one thought occurs to me, suggested by your den recollection of the reform to which you have much dismeasure the actions and outward habits of the hu

without examining the hidden causes of those actions. There is some basis in our nature for all general customs, both of body and mind. The mutual relation of man and woman, in Society, is determined not by a conscious exercise of tyranny on the one side, or subjection on the other. Each sex has its peculiar mental and moral laws, the differences between which are perhaps too subtle and indefinable to be distinctly drawn, but they are as palpable in life as the white and red which neighboring roses draw from the self-same soil. When we have differed in regard to Woman, I have meant to speak sincerely and earnestly, out of the knowledge gained by an unfortunate experience, which, nevertheless, has not touched the honor and reverence in which I hold the sex. I ask you to remember this, in case the confidence I have forced upon you should hereafter set a gulf between us.

“I have deprived myself of the right to make any request, but whatever your judgment may be, will you let me hear it from your own lips? Will you allow me to see you once more? I write to you now, not because I should shrink from speaking the same words, but because a history like mine is not always easily or clearly told, and I wish your mind, to be uninfluenced by the sympathy which a living voice might inspire.

“On Tuesday next you will be free to take your accustomed walk. May I be your companion again, beside the stream? But, no: do not write: you will find me there if you consent to see me. If you do not come, I shall expect the written evidence, if not of your continued respect, at least of your forgiveness. But, in any case, think of me always as one man who, having known you, will never cease to honor Woman.

“Your friend,

“MAXWELL WOODBURY.”

immortal yearning: was he unworthy to receive it? "Try me," he had written, "by the sacred instincts of your own nature, and according to them pardon or condemn me." She had already pardoned. Perhaps, had she read the same words coming from a stranger, or as an incident of a romance, she would have paused and deliberated; her natural severity would have been slow to relax; but knowing Woodbury as she had latterly learned to know him, in his frankness, his manly firmness and justice, his noble consideration for herself her heart did not delay the answer to his questions. He had put her to shame by voluntarily revealing his weakness, while she had determined that she would never allow him to discover her own.

Little by little, however, after it became clear that her sympathy and her charity were justifiable, the deeper questions which lay hidden beneath the ostensible purpose of his letter crept to the surface. In her ignorance of the coming confession, she had not asked herself, in advance, why it should have been made; she supposed it would be its own explanation. The reason he had given was not in itself sufficient, but presupposed something more important which he had not expressed. No man makes such a confidence from a mere feeling of curiosity. Simultaneously with this question came another—why should he fancy that his act might possibly set a gulf between them? Was it simply the sensitiveness of a nature which would feel itself profaned by having its secrets misunderstood? No; a heart thus sensitive would prefer the security of silence. Was he conscious of a dawning love, and, doubtful of himself, did he ask for a woman's truer interpretation of his capacity to give and keep faith? "It is cruel in him to ask me," she said to herself; "does he think my heart is insensible as marble, that I should probe it with thoughts, every one of which inflicts a wound? Why does he not send his confession at once to *her*? It is she who should hear it, not I! He is already guilty of treason to her, in asking the question of *me*!"

about her duties as if in a dream. She knew that her mother's eye sometimes rested uneasily on her pale face, and the confession of her trouble more than once rose to her tongue, but she resolutely determined to postpone it until the dreaded crisis was past. She would not agitate the invalid with her confused apprehensions, all of which, moreover, might prove themselves to have been needless. With every fresh conflict in her mind her judgment seemed to become more unsteady. The thought of Woodbury's love, having once revealed itself to her, would not be banished, and every time it returned, it seemed to bring a gentler and tenderer feeling for him into her heart. On the other hand her dreams of a career devoted to the cause of Woman ranged themselves before her mental vision, in an attitude of desperate resistance. "Now is the test!" they seemed to say: "vindicate your sex, or yield to the weakness of your heart, and add to its reproach!"

When Monday came, it brought no cessation of the struggle, but she had recovered something of her usual self-control. She had put aside, temporarily, the consideration of her doubts; the deeper she penetrated into the labyrinth, the more she became entangled, and she made up her mind to wait, with as much calmness as she could command, for the approaching solution. The forms of terror, of longing, of defence and of submission continually made their presence felt by turns, or chaotically together, but the only distinct sensation she permitted herself to acknowledge was this: that if her forebodings were true, the severest trial of her life awaited her. Her pride forbade her to shrink from the trial, yet every hour that brought her nearer to it increased her dread of the meeting.

Her mother's strength was failing rapidly, and on this day she required Hannah's constant attendance. When, at last, the latter was relieved for the night, her fatigue, combined with the wakeful torment of the two preceding nights, completely overpowered her and she slumbered fast and heavily until morning. Her first waking thought was—"The day :

from the tops of the elms. The road was deserted, as far as she could see, but the sound of farmers calling to their oxen came distinctly across the valley from the fields on the eastern hill. Nature seemed to lie benumbed, in drowsy half-consciousness of her being, as if under some narcotic influence.

She walked slowly forward, striving to subdue the anxious beating of her heart. At the junction of the highways, she stole a glance down the Anacreon road: nobody was to be seen. Down the other: a farm-wagon was on its way home from Ptolemy—that was all. To the first throb of relief succeeded a feeling of disappointment. The walk through the meadow-thickets would be more lonely than ever, remembering the last time she had seen them. As she looked towards their dark-green mounds, drifted over with the downy tufts of the seeded clematis, a figure suddenly emerged from the nearest path and hastened towards her across the meadow!

He let down the bars for her entrance and stood waiting for her. His brown eyes shone with a still, happy light, and his face brightened as if struck by a wandering sunbeam. He looked so frank and kind—so cheered by her coming—so unembarrassed by the knowledge of the confession he had made, that the wild beating of her heart was partially soothed, and she grew calmer in his presence.

"Thank you!" he said, as he took her hand, both in greeting and to assist her over the fallen rails. When he had put them up, and regained her side, he spoke again: "Shall we not go on to that lovely nook of yours beside the creek? I have taken a great fancy to the spot; I have recalled it to my memory a thousand times since then."

"Yes, if you wish it," she answered.

As they threaded the tangled paths, he spoke cheerfully and pleasantly, drawing her into talk of the autumnal plants, of the wayward rapids and eddies of the stream, of all sights and sounds around them. A balmy quiet, which she mistook for strength, took possession of her heart. She reached the secluded nook, with a feeling of timid expectancy, it is tr

but with scarcely a trace of her former overpowering dread. There lay the log, as if awaiting them, and the stream gurgled contentedly around the point, and the hills closed loftily through blue vapor, up the valley, like the entrance to an Alpine gorge.

As soon as they were seated, Woodbury spoke. "Can you answer my questions?"

"You have made that easy for me," she replied, in a low voice. "It seems to me rather a question of character than of experience. A man naturally false and inconstant might have the same history to relate, but I am sure you are true. You should ask those questions of your own heart; where you are sure of giving fidelity, you would commit no treason in bestowing—attachment."

She dared not utter the other word in her mind.

"I was not mistaken in you!" he exclaimed. "You have the one quality which I demand of every man or woman in whom I confide; you distinguish between what is true in human nature and what is conventionally true. I must show myself to you as I am, though the knowledge should give you pain. The absolution of the sinner," he added, smiling, "is already half-pronounced in his confession."

"Why should I be your confessor?" she asked. "The knowledge of yourself which you have confided to me, thus far, does not give me pain. It has not lowered you in my esteem, but I feel, nevertheless, that your confidence is a gift which I have done nothing to deserve, and which I ought not to accept unless—unless I were able to make some return. If I had answered your questions otherwise, I do not think it would have convinced you, against your own feelings. With your integrity of heart, you do not need the aid of a woman whose experience of life is so much more limited than yours."

She spoke very slowly and deliberately, and the sentences seemed to come with an effort. Woodbury saw that her clear vision had pierced through his flimsy stratagem, and guessed that she must necessarily suspect the truth. Still, he

drew back from the final venture upon which so much depended. He would first sound the depth of her suspicions.

"No man," he said, gently, "can be independent of woman's judgment, without loss to himself. Her purer nature is a better guide to him than his own clouded instincts. I should not have attributed a different answer to your true self, but to the severe ideas of duty which I imagined you to possess. You were right to suppose that I had already answered for myself, but can you not understand the joy of hearing it thus confirmed? Can you not appreciate the happy knowledge that one's heart has not been opened in vain?"

"I can understand it, though I have had little experience of such knowledge. But I had not supposed that you needed it, Mr. Woodbury—least of all from me. We seem to have had so little in common——"

• "Not so!" he interrupted. "Opinions, no matter how powerfully they may operate to shape our lives, are external circumstances, compared with the deep, original springs of character. You and I have only differed on the outside, and hence we first clashed when we came in contact; but now I recognize in you a nature for which I have sought long and wearily. I seek some answering recognition, and in my haste have scarcely given you time to examine whether any features in myself have grown familiar to you. I see now that I was hasty: I should have waited until the first false impression was removed."

The memory of Mrs. Waldo's reproach arose in Hannah Thurston's mind. "Oh no, you mistake me!" she cried. "I am no longer unjust to you. But you surpass me in magnanimity as you have already done in justice. You surprised me by a sacred confidence which is generally accorded only to a tried friend. I had given you no reason to suppose that I was a friend: I had almost made myself an enemy."

"Let the Past be past: I know you now. My confidence was not entirely magnanimous. It was a test."

"And I have stood it?" she faltered.

He did not misinterpret her excitement, which yielded more than it assailed. "No, Hannah!" he said tenderly, "I would give you strength, not take it from you—the strength of my love, and sympathy, and encouragement. I know how these aims have taken hold upon you: they are built upon a basis of earnest truth which *I* recognize, and though I differ with you as to the ends to be attained, we may both enlighten each other, and mutual tenderness and mutual respect govern our relations in this as in all else. Do not think that I would make my love a fetter. I can trust to your nature working itself into harmony with mine. If I find, through the dearer knowledge of you, that I have misunderstood Woman, I will atone for the error; and I will ask nothing of you but that which I know you will give—the acknowledgment of the deeper truth that is developed with the progress of life."

She trembled from head to foot. "Say no more," she murmured, in a faint, hollow voice, "I cannot bear it. Oh, what will become of me? You are noble and generous—I was learning to look up to you and to accept your help, and now you torture me!"

He was pitiless. He read her more truly than she read herself, and he saw that the struggle must now be fought out to its end. Her agitation gave him hope—it was the surge and swell of a rising tide of passion which she resisted with the last exercise of a false strength. He must seem more cruel still, though the conflict in her heart moved him to infinite pity. His voice assumed a new power as he spoke again:

"Hannah," he said, "*I must* speak. Remember that I am pleading for all the remaining years of my life—and, it may be, for yours. Here is no question of subjection; I offer you the love that believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. It is not for me to look irreverently into your maiden heart: but, judging you, as woman, by myself, as man, you must have dreamed of a moment like this. You must have tried to imagine the face of the unknown beloved; you must have prefigured the holy confidence of love which would

you to give your fate into his hands
 on the blessed life, united with his, the
 st, of feeling, and of faith, the protection
 e, the consoling tenderness on yours—
 She seized his arm with the hand nearest
 convulsively. Her head dropped towards
 er face was hidden from his view. He gently
 and and held it in his own. But he would
 obedience to her dumb signal: he steeled his he
 pain, and went on:

"You have tried to banish this dream from y
 you have tried in vain. You have turned away
 temptation of the lonely future, and cried aloud
 ment in the silence of your soul. By day and by
 clung to you, a torment, but too dear and beauti
 nounced—"

He paused. She did not withdraw her han
 but she was sobbing passionately. Still, her head
 away from him. Her strength was only broke
 dued.

"Remember," he said, "that nothing in our live
 the picture which anticipates its coming. I am
 of your dreams. Such as I fancy them to be, no
 earth would be worthy to represent him. But I ca
 the tenderness, the faith, the support you have cla
 him, in your heart. Do not reject them while a s
 of your nature tells you that some portion of your
 may be possible in us. The fate of two lives depen
 answer: in this hour trust every thing to the true vo
 heart. You say you cannot hate me?"

She shook her head, without speaking. She wa
 bing violently.

"I do not ask you, in this moment, if you love m
 not stake my future on a venture which I feel to b
 But I will ask you this: *could* you love me?"
 She made no sign: her hand lay in his, and her

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bent towards her bosom. He took her other hand, and holding them both, whispered: "Hannah, look at me."

She turned her head slowly, with a helpless submission, and lifted her face. Her cheeks were wet with tears, and her lovely dark-gray eyes, dimmed by the floods that had gushed from them in spite of herself, met his gaze imploringly. The strong soul of manhood met and conquered the woman in that glance. He read his triumph, but veiled his own consciousness of it—curbed his triumphant happiness, lest she should take alarm. Softly and gently, he stole one arm around her waist and drew her to his breast. The violence of her agitation gradually ceased; then, lifting her head, she withdrew from his clasp, and spoke, very softly and falteringly, with her eyes fixed on the ground:

"Yes, Maxwell, it is as I have feared. I will not say that I love you now, for my heart is disturbed. It is powerless to act for me, in your presence. I have felt and struggled against your power, but you have conquered me. If you love me, pity me also, and make a gentle use of your triumph. Do not bind me by any promise at present. Be satisfied with the knowledge that has come to me—that I have been afraid to love you, because I foresaw how easy it would be. Do not ask any thing more of me now. I can bear no more to-day. My strength is gone, and I am weak as a child. Be magnanimous."

He drew her once more softly to his breast and kissed her lips. There was no resistance, but a timid answering pressure. He kissed her again, with the passionate clinging sweetness of a heart that seals an eternal claim. She tore herself loose from him and cried with a fiery vehemence: "God will curse you if you deceive me now! You have bound me to think of you, day and night, to recall your looks and words, to—oh, Maxwell, to what have you not bound my heart!"

"I would bind you to no more than I give," he answered. "I ask no promise. Let us simply be free to find our way to the full knowledge of each other. When you can trust your

"Be kind to me," she added, after a pause, releasing her hand from his clasp and half turning away: "Consider how I have failed—how I have been deceived in myself. Another woman would have been justly proud and happy in my place, for she would not have had the hopes of years to uproot, nor have had to answer to her heart the accusation of disloyalty to humanity."

"We will let that accusation rest," he soothed her. "Do not think that you have failed: you never seemed so strong to me as now. There can be no question of conflicting power between two equal hearts whom love unites in the same destiny. The time will come when this apparent discord will appear to you as a 'harmony not understood.' But, until then, I shall never say a word to you which shall not be meant to solve doubt, and allay fear, and strengthen confidence."

"Let me go back, now, to my mother," she said. "Heaven pardon me, I had almost forgotten her. She wanted me to bring her some gentians. It is very late and she will be alarmed."

He led her back through the tangled, briery paths. She took his offered hand with a mechanical submission, but the touch thrilled her through and through with a sweetness so new and piercing, that she reproached herself at each return, as if the sensation were forbidden. Woodbury gathered for her a bunch of the lovely fringed gentian, with the short autumn ferns, and the downy, fragrant silver of the life-everlasting. They walked side by side, silently, down the meadow, and slowly up the road to the widow's cottage.

"I will deliver the flowers myself," said he, as they reached the gate, "Besides, is it not best that your mother should know of what has passed?"

She could not deny him. In the next moment they were in the little sitting-room. Mrs. Styles expected company to tea, and took her leave as soon as they appeared.

"Mother, will thee see Mr. Woodbury?" said Hannah,

opening the door into the adjoining room, where the invalid sat, comfortably propped up in her bed.

"Thee knows I am always glad to see him," came the answer, in a faint voice.

They entered together, and Woodbury laid the flowers on her bed. The old woman looked from one to another with a glance which, by a sudden clairvoyance, saw the truth. A new light came over her face. "Maxwell!" she cried; "Hannah!"

"Mother!" answered the daughter, sinking on her knees and burying her face in the bed-clothes.

Tears gushed from the widow's eyes and rolled down her hollow cheeks. "I see how it is," she said; "I prayed that it might happen. The Lord blesses me once more before I die. Come here, Maxwell, and take a mother's blessing. I give my dear daughter freely into thy hands."

Hannah heard the words. She felt that the bond, thus consecrated by the blessing of her dying mother, dared not be broken.

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN WHICH ALL RETREAT IS CUT OFF.

"COME back to-morrow, Maxwell," the Widow Thurston had said, as he took an affectionate leave of her; "come back, and let me hear what thee and Hannah have to say. I am too weak now to talk any more. My life has been so little acquainted with sudden visitations of joy, that this knowledge takes hold of my strength. Thee may leave me too, Hannah; I think I could sleep a little."

The latter carefully smoothed and arranged the pillows, and left the invalid to repose. Woodbury was waiting for her, in the door leading from the sitting-room to the hall. "I am going home now," he said; "can you give me a word of hope and comfort on the way? tell me that you trust me!"

"Oh, I do, I do!" she exclaimed; "Do not mistake either my agitation or my silence. I believe that if I could once be in harmony with myself, what I have heard from your lips to-day would make me happy. I am like my mother," she added, with a melancholy smile, "I am more accustomed to contempt than honor."

He led her into the hall and closed the door behind them. He put one arm protectingly around her, and she felt herself supported against the world. "Hereafter, Hannah," he whispered, "no one can strike at you except through me. Good-by until to-morrow!" He bent his head towards her face, and their eyes met. His beamed with a softened fire, a dewy tenderness and sweetness, before which her soul shivered and tingled in warm throbs of bliss, so quick and sharp as to touch the verge of pain. A wonderful, unknown fascination drew

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his. She felt the passionate pressure; her frame; she heard the door open and close as in a dream, felt her way to the staircase, where she sank upon a step and buried her face in her hands. The kiss burned either thought, nor strove to think. Dissolving rings of light along her nerves. The blood of a new life rustled in her ears, as if the spirits of and splendor formed and faded under her closed lids, newly-opened flowers were whispering in the summer wind. She was lapped in a spell too delicious to break—an exquisite weakness of her being, beside which all narcotics would have been gross. External sounds appealed no more to her senses; the present, with its unfinished struggles, its torturing doubts, its prophecies of coming sorrow, faded far away, and her soul lay helpless and unresisting in the arms of a single sensation.

All at once, a keen, excited voice, close at hand, called her name. It summoned her to herself with a start which took away her breath.

"My dear girl! Good gracious, what's the matter!" exclaimed Mrs. Waldo, who stood before her. "I saw your mother was asleep, and I've been hunting you all over the house. You were not asleep, too?"

"I believe I was trying to think."

"Bless me, haven't you thought enough yet? I should say, from the look of your face, that you had seen a ghost—no, it must have been an angel! Don't look so, my dear, or I shall be afraid that you are going to die."

"If I were to die, it would make all things clear," Hannah Thurston answered, with a strong effort of self-control; "but I must first learn to live. Do not be alarmed on my account. I am troubled and anxious: I am not my old self."

"I don't wonder at it," rejoined Mrs. Waldo, tenderly. "You must see the loss that is coming, as well as the rest."

met him with an air of touching frankness and reliance, clasping his hand with a tender firmness which atoned for the silence of her lips. She looked pale and exhausted, but a soft, rosy flush passed over her face and faded away.

"I will tell mother you have come," she said. The next moment she reappeared at the door of the sick-room, and beckoned him to enter.

The widow was still in bed, and it was plainly to be seen that she would never leave it again. The bouquet of gentian and life-everlasting stood on a little table near her head. Her prim Quaker cap was uncrumpled by the pillow, and a light fawn-colored shawl enveloped her shoulders. She might have been placed in the gallery of the meeting-house, among her sister Friends, without a single fold being changed. Her thin hands rested weakly on the coverlet, and her voice was scarcely above a whisper, but the strong soul which had sustained her life was yet clear in her eye.

The daughter placed a chair for Woodbury by the bedside. He sat down and took the old woman's hand in both his own. She looked at him with a gentle, affectionate, motherly benignity, which made his eyes dim with the thought of his own scarcely-remembered mother.

"Maxwell," she said at last, "thee sees my days on the earth are not many. Thee will be honest with me, therefore, and answer me out of thy heart. I have not had many opportunities of seeing thee, but thee had my confidence from the first. Thee has had thy struggles with the world; thee is old enough to know thyself, and I will believe that thee hast learned to know Hannah, truly. She is not like other girls: she was always inclined to go her own way, but she has never failed in her duty to me, and I am sure she will not fail in her duty as thy wife."

Hannah, sitting at the foot of the bed, started at these words. She looked imploringly at her mother, but did not speak.

"Yes, Hannah," continued the old woman, "I have no

ee, when thee once comes to understand thy true woman. Thee was always more like thy y father than I see that it has not been easy for thee e to give up of independence, but I am sure that t thy husband ntle and forbearing, so that thee will ha eardly feel the ill thee not, Maxwell?"

' Woodbury replied. "I have told yo our daughter pose no conditions upon our union. It was the truth of her nature which drew me al almost against o love her. I have such entire faith in in that truth, eve we shall gradually come into comple elete harmony, in our feelings and aspirations, but even in our views of life. I am ready to sacrific ece whatever convictions may stand in the way of ou ur mutual ap- and I only ask of Hannah that she wil ill allow, not e natural progress of her heart in the e knowledge of

hears what he says?" said the old w man, turning on her daughter. "Maxwell has answ ered the ques- tended to ask: he loves thee, Ha nah, as thee to be loved. The thought of leaving thee alone in d was a cross which I could not bring my mind to he Lord has been merciful. He has led to thee the a into whose hands I can deliver thee, with the cer- at he will be thy stay and thy happiness when I am 'ell me, my daughter, does thee answer his affection me spirit?"

ner," sobbed Hannah, "thee knows I would show heart if I could. Maxwell deserves all e he honor and e I am capable of giving: he has been m ost noble and tender towards me: I cannot reject him—it is not in re—and yet—don't think hard of me, m other—it has so suddenly, it is so new and strange." ble to speak she paused and covered her face, una

seems that I know thee better than I thought," said

the widow, and something like a smile flitted over her wasted features. "Thee needn't say any thing more: my mind is at rest. Come nearer to me, here, and seat thyself at Maxwell's side. I have a serious concern upon me, and you must both bear with me while I tell it."

The daughter came and seated herself at the head of the bed, beside Woodbury. The mother's right hand seemed to feel for hers, and she gave it. The other found its way, she knew not how, into his. The old woman looked at them both, and the expression of peace and resignation left her eyes. They were filled with a tender longing which she hesitated to put into words. In place of the latter came tears, and then her tongue was loosed.

"My children," she whispered, "it is best to be plain with you. From day to day I expect to hear the Master's call. I have done with the things of this life; my work is over, and now the night cometh, when I shall rest. The thought came to me in the silent watches, when I lifted up my soul to the Lord and thanked Him that He had heard my prayer. I thought, then, that nothing more was wanting; and, indeed, it may be unreasonable of me to ask more. But what I ask seems to be included in what has already happened. I know the instability of earthly things, and I should like to see with these eyes, the security of my daughter's fate. Maxwell, I lost the little son who would have been so near thy age had he lived. Will thee give me the right to call *thee* 'son' in his place? Is thee so sure of thy heart that thee could give Hannah thy name *now*? It is a foolish wish of mine, I know; but if you love each other, children, you may be glad, in the coming time, that the poor old mother lived to see and to bless your union!"

Woodbury was profoundly moved. He tenderly kissed the wasted hand he held, and said, in a hushed, reverential voice: "I am sure of my own heart. With your daughter's consent, it shall be as you say."

"Mother, mother!" cried Hannah: "I cannot leave thee!"

entire faith from Woodbury, with his parting kiss of yesterday still warm upon her lips?

She leaned forward, and bent her head upon the old woman's breast. "Mother," she said, in a scarcely audible voice, "it shall be as thee wishes."

The widow tenderly stroked her dark-brown hair. "If I were not sure it was right, Hannah," she said, "I would give thee back thy consent. Let it be soon, pray, for I see that my sojourn with you is well-nigh its end."

"Let it be to-morrow, Hannah," Woodbury then said. "Every thing shall be afterwards as it was before. I will not take you from your mother's bedside, but you will simply give me the right to offer, and her the right to receive, a son's help and comfort."

It was so arranged. Only the persons most intimately connected with both—Waldos, Merryfields, Bute and Carrie—were to be informed of the circumstances and invited to be present. Mr. Waldo, of course, was to solemnize the union, though the widow asked that the Quaker form of marriage should first be repeated in her presence. She was exhausted by the interview, and Woodbury soon took his leave, to give the necessary announcements.

Hannah accompanied him to the door, and when it closed behind him, murmured to herself:

"I strove against the stream, and strove in vain—
Let the great river bear me to the main!"

The Waldos were alone in their little parlor—alone, but not lonely; for they were one of those fortunate wedded pairs who never tire of their own society. The appearance of Woodbury, out of the wind and rain, was a welcome surprise, and they both greeted him with hearty delight.

"Husband," cried Mrs. Waldo, "do put the poor horse into our stable, beside Dobbin. Mr. Woodbury will not think of going home until after tea."

The clergyman was half-way through the door before t

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grasp his arm. "Stay, if you please,"
thing to say, at once, to both of you."
e was so grave and earnest, that
m with a sudden alarm. Something
l while it perplexed them.

promised you, Mrs. Waldo," he continued, "that
nd should perform the marriage ceremony for me.
as come when I can fulfil my promise.
morrow!"

gyman's lips receded so as to exhibit,
, but also a considerable portion of the
k eyes expanded, her hands involuntarily came
a violent clasp, and her breath was suspended.
to be married to-morrow," Woodbury repeated.
h Thurston."

ldo dropped into the nearest chair. "It's a poor
aid, at last, with a feeble attempt to laugh; "and
have believed you could make it."

y few words he told them the truth
rs. Waldo sprang upon her feet, threw
, and kissed him tempestuously. "I
she cried, giving way to a mild hysterical fit of
d tears: "It's so rarely things happen as they
his world! What a fool I've been, to think you
other! I shall never trust my eyes again, no, nor
or my stupid brains. I'll warrant Mr. s. Blake was
per than I have been; see if she is surprised when
er word! Oh, you dear people, how happy you
me—I'd rather it should come so than that hus-
d get a thousand converts, and build the biggest
tolemy!"

do also was moved, in his peculiar
throat as if about to commence a prayer, walked
s to the door and back, squeezing
at each return, and finally went to
ed: "It is very stormy to-day,"
the window

In proportion as the good people recovered from their happy amazement, Woodbury found it difficult to tear himself away. They stormed him with questions about the rise and progress of his attachment, which his sense of delicacy forbade him to answer. "It is enough," he said, "that we love each other, and that we are to be married to-morrow." As he turned his horse's head towards Ptolemy, a figure wrapped in an old cloak and with a shapeless quilted hood upon the head, appeared on the plank sidewalk hastening in the direction of the widow's cottage. It was Mrs. Waldo.

The Merryfields were also at home when he called. Their life had, of late, been much more quiet and subdued than formerly, and hence they have almost vanished out of this history; but, from the friendly relation which they bore to Hannah Thurston, they could not well be omitted from the morrow's occasion. The news was unexpected, but did not seem to astonish them greatly, as they were both persons of slow perceptions, and had not particularly busied their minds about either of the parties.

"I'm sure I'm very glad, as it were," said Mr. Merryfield. "There are not many girls like Hannah Thurston, and she deserves to be well provided for."

"Yes, it's a good thing for her," remarked his wife, with a little touch of malice, which, however, was all upon the surface; "but Women's Rights will be what they always was, if their advocates give them up."

Darkness was setting down, and the rain fell in torrents, as Woodbury reached Lakeside. Bute, who had been coming to the door every five minutes for the last hour, had heard the rattling of wheels through the storm, and the Irishman was already summoned to take charge of the horse. In the sitting-room it was snug, and bright, and cheerful. A wood-fire blazed on the hearth, and Mrs. Carrie, with a silk handkerchief tied under her chin, was dodging about the tea-table. By the kindly glow in his heart towards these two happy

creatures, Woodbury felt that his cure was complete; their bliss no longer had power to disturb him.

"How pleasant it is here!" he said. "You really make the house home-like, Mrs. Wilson."

Carrie's eyes sparkled and her cheeks reddened with delight. Bute thought: "He's had no unlucky business, after all." But he was discreet enough to ask no questions.

After tea, Woodbury did not go into the library, as usual. He drew a chair towards the fire, and for a while watched Mrs. Wilson's fingers, as they rapidly plied the needles upon a pair of winter socks for Bute. The latter sat on the other side of the fire, reading Dana's "Two Years before the Mast."

"Bute," said Woodbury, suddenly, "do you think we have room for another, in the house?"

To his surprise, Bute blushed up to the temples, and seemed embarrassed how to answer. He looked stealthily at Carrie.

Woodbury smiled, and hastened to release him from his error. "Because," said he, "you brought something to Lakeside more contagious than your fever. I have caught it, and now *I* am going to marry."

"Oh, Mr. Max., you don't mean it! It's not Miss Amelia Smith?"

Woodbury burst into a laugh.

"How can you think of such a thing, Bute?" exclaimed his wife. "There's only one woman in all Ptolemy worthy of Mr. Woodbury, and yet I'm afraid it isn't her."

"Who, Mrs. Wilson?"

"You won't be offended, Sir, will you? I mean Hannah Thurston."

"You have guessed it!"

Carrie gave a little scream and dropped her knitting. Bute tried to laugh, but something caught in his throat, and in his efforts to swallow it the water came into his eyes.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONCERNING MARRIAGE, DEATH, GOSSIP, AND GOING HOME.

THE occasion which called the few friends together at the cottage, the next morning, was sad and touching, as well as joyful. At least, each one felt that the usual cheerful sympathy with consummated love would be out of place, in circumstances so unusual and solemn. The widow felt that she was robbing her daughter's marriage of that sunshine which of right belonged to it, but in this, as in all other important decisions of life, she was guided by "the spirit." She perceived, indeed, that Hannah had not yet reached the full consciousness of her love—that the fixed characteristics of her mind fought continually against her heart, and would so fight while any apparent freedom of will remained; and, precisely for this reason, the last exercise of maternal authority was justified to her own soul. In the clairvoyance of approaching death she looked far enough into the future to know that, without this bond, her daughter's happiness was uncertain: with it, she saw the struggling elements resolve themselves into harmony.

Woodbury suspected the mother's doubt, though he did not share it to the same extent. He believed that the fierceness of the struggle was over. The chain was forged, and by careful forbearance and tenderness it might be imperceptibly clasped. There were still questions to be settled, but he had already abdicated the right of control; he had intrusted their solution to the natural operation of time and love. He would neither offer nor accept any express stipulations of rights, for this one promise embraced them all. Her nature could only be soothed to content in its new destiny by the deeper knowl-

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which that destiny would bring, and therefore, the
her's request was perhaps best for both. It only imposed
on him a more guarded duty, a more watchful self-control,
the newness of their relation to each other.

Mrs. Waldo, unable to sleep all night from the excitement
her honest heart, was with Hannah Thurston early in the
morning. It was as well, no doubt, that the latter was allowed
time for solitary reflection, as the hour approached. By
one o'clock the other friends, who had first driven to the Cim-
inian Parsonage, made their appearance in the little sitting-
room. Woodbury came in company with Mr. Waldo, followed
by Bute and Carrie. He was simply dressed in black, without
elaborate waistcoat and cravat of a bridegroom. But for
want of his coat collar, the Friends themselves would not
have found fault with his apparel. His face was calm and
 serene: whatever emotion he felt did not appear on the
face.

Mrs. Merryfield, in a lavender-colored silk, which made her
pale complexion appear worse than ever, occasionally raised
her handkerchief to her eyes, although there were no signs of
usual moisture in them.

The door to the invalid's room was open, and the bed had
been moved near it, so that she could both see and converse
with the company in the sitting-room. Her spotless book-
lin handkerchief and shawl of white crapesilk were
palely whiter than her face, but a deep and quiet content
gleamed in her eyes and gave its sweetness to her feeble voice.
She greeted them all with a grateful and kindly cheerfulness.
The solemnity of the hour was scarcely above the earnest
glow of her soul.

Presently Hannah Thurston came into the room. She was
dressed in white muslin, with a very plain lace collar and knitted
white satin ribbon. Her soft dark hair, unadorned but
single flower, was brought a little further forward on the top of her head.
Her gentle feminine outline to her brow.

was composed and pale, but for a spot of red on each cheek, and a singularly ~~vague~~ ^{blue}, weary expression in her eyes. When Woodbury took her hand it was icy cold. She received the greetings of the others quietly, and then went forward to the bedside, at the beckon of her mother. The latter had been allowed to direct the ceremony according to her wish, and the time had now arrived.

The bridal pair took their seats in the sitting-room, side by side, and facing the open door where the invalid lay. The guests, on either side of them, formed a half-circle, so arranged that she could see them all. She, indeed, seemed to be the officiating priestess, on whom depended the solemnization of the rite. After a few moments of silence, such as is taken for worship in Quaker meetings, she began to speak. Her voice gathered strength as she proceeded, and assumed the clear, chanting tone with which, in former years, she had been wont to preach from the gallery where she sat among the women-elders of the sect.

"My friends," she said, "I feel moved to say a few words to you all. I feel that you have not come here without a realizing sense of the occasion which has called you together, and that your hearts are prepared to sympathize with those which are now to be joined in the sight of the Lord. I have asked of them that they allow mine eyes, in the short time that is left to me for the things of earth, to look upon their union. When I have seen that, I can make my peace with the world, and, although I have not been in all things a faithful servant, I can hope that the joy of the Lord will not be shut out from my soul. I feel the approach of the peace that passeth understanding, and would not wish that, for my sake, the house of gladness be made the house of mourning. Let your hearts be not disturbed by the thought of me. Rejoice, rather, that the son I lost so long ago is found at the eleventh hour, and that the prop for which I sought, for strength to walk through the Valley of the Shadow, is mercifully placed in my hands. For I say unto you all, the pure

other—bear each other's burdens. Hannah, is there peace in thy heart now?"

"Mother, I have promised," she answered; "I have given my life into Maxwell's hands: peace will come to me."

"The Lord give it to thee, as He hath given it to me!" She closed her eyes, utterly exhausted, but happy.

The marriage certificate was then produced and signed by those present, after which they took their leave. Woodbury remained until evening, assisting his wife in her attendance on the invalid, or keeping her company in the sitting-room, when the latter slept. He said nothing of his love, or his new claim upon her. Rightly judging that her nature needed rest, after the severe tension of the past week, he sought to engage her in talk that would call her thoughts away from herself. He was so successful in this that the hours fled fast, and when he left with the falling night, to return to Lakeside, she felt as if a stay had been withdrawn from her.

The next morning he was back again at an early hour, taking his place as one of the household, as quietly and unobtrusively as if he had long been accustomed to it. Another atmosphere came into the cottage with him—a sense of strength and reliance, and tender, protecting care, which was exceedingly grateful to Hannah. The chaos of her emotions was already beginning to subside, or, rather, to set towards her husband in a current that grew swifter day after day. The knowledge that her fate was already determined silenced at once what would otherwise have been her severest conflict; her chief remaining task was to reconcile the cherished aims of her mind with the new sphere of duties which encompassed her life. At present, however, even this task must be postponed. She dared think of nothing but her mother, and Woodbury's share in the cares and duties of the moment became more and more welcome and grateful. It thrilled her with a sweet sense of the kinship of their hearts, when she heard him address the old woman as "mother"—when his arm, as tender as strong, lifted that mother from the bed to the rocking-

ing color, would not be inappropriate, resolved also to attend the funeral services.

As the hour drew nigh, the road in front of the little cottage was crowded with vehicles. It was a mild, sunny October afternoon, and as the room in which the corpse lay would not contain a tenth part of the guests, they filled the yard and garden and even the side-walk in front, entering the house as they arrived, to take that silent look at the dead which is suggested, let us believe, more by human sympathy than by human curiosity. And, indeed, a solemn loveliness of repose rested on the thin, composed features of the corpse. All shadow of pain had passed away, and an aspect of ineffable peace and comfort had settled in its place. Her hands were laid, one over the other, upon her breast—not with the stony pressure of death, but as if in the light unconsciousness of sleep. Upon the coffin-lid lay a wreath of life-everlasting, its gray, silvery leaves and rich, enduring odor, harmonizing well with the subdued tastes and the quiet integrity of the sect to which the old widow had belonged. Even the Rev. Lemuel Styles, to whom the term "Quaker" implied a milder form of infidelity, stood for a long time beside the coffin, absorbed in the beauty of the calm, dead face, and murmured as he turned away: "She hath found Peace."

Two old Friends from Tiberius, with their wives, were also in attendance, and the latter devoted themselves to Hannah, as if it were a special duty imposed upon them. Before the coffin-lid was screwed down, they sat for some time beside the corpse, with their handkerchiefs pressed tightly over their mouths. Their husbands, with Mr. Waldo and Merryfield, bore the coffin to the hearse. The guests gathered around and in front of the house now began to open their eyes and prick their ears. The daughter must presently appear, as first of the mourners, and in company with her husband, if she were really married. They had not long to wait. Hannah, leaning on Woodbury's arm, issued from the front door of the cottage, and slowly passed down the gravel walk to the

tences he uttered. It was not Doctrine, but Religion, which inspired his words, and the most intolerant of his hearers felt their power while secretly censuring the act. He, too, referred to the widow's life as an example of pious resignation, and prayed that the same Christian virtue might come to dwell in the hearts of all present.

When the coffin had been lowered, and the first spadeful of earth, though softly let down into the grave, dropped upon the lid with a muffled, hollow roll, Hannah started as if in pain, and clung with both hands to her husband's arm. He bent his head to her face and whispered a word; what it was, no other ear than hers succeeded in hearing. The dull, rumbling sounds continued, until the crumbling whisper of the particles of earth denoted that the coffin was forever covered from sight. Then they turned away, leaving the mild Autumn sun to shine on the new mound, and the thrush to pipe his broken song over the silence of the dead.

The moment the churchyard gate was passed, Ptolemy returned to its gossip. The incredulous fact was admitted, but the mystery surrounding it was not yet explained. In the few families who considered themselves "the upper circle," and were blessed with many daughters, to none of whom the rich owner of Lakeside had been indifferent, there was great and natural exasperation.

"I consider it flying in the face of Providence," said Mrs. Hamilton Bue to her husband, as they drove homewards; "for a man like him, who knows what society is, and ought to help to purify it from fanaticism, to marry a strong-minded woman like she is. And after all he said against their doctrines! I should call it hypocritical, I should!"

"Martha," her husband answered, "If I were you, I wouldn't say much about it, for a while yet. He's only insured in the Saratoga Mutual for a year, to try it."

Mrs. Styles consoled her sister, Miss Legrand, who at one time allowed herself dim hopes of interesting Woodbury in her behalf. "I always feared that he was not entirely firm in

"Hannah," he said, "my dear wife, how can I leave you here alone, to these sad associations? This can no longer be your home. Come to me with your burden, and let me help you to bear it."

"Oh, Maxwell," she answered, "you are my help and my comfort. No one else has the same right to share my sorrow. My place is beside you: I will try to fill it as I ought: but—Maxwell—can I, dare I enter your home as a bride, coming thus directly from the grave of my mother?"

"You will bring her blessing in the freshness of its sanctity," he said. "Understand me, Hannah. In the reverence for your sorrow, my love is patient. Enter my home, now, as the guest of my heart, giving me only the right to soothe and comfort, until you can hear, without reproach, the voice of love."

His noble consideration for her grief and her loneliness melted Hannah's heart. Through all the dreary sense of her loss penetrated the gratitude of love. She lifted her arms and clasped them about his neck. "Take me, my dear husband," she whispered, "take me, rebellious as I have been, unworthy as I am, and teach me to deserve your magnanimity."

He took her home that evening, under the light of the rising moon, down the silence of the valley, through the gathering mists of the meadows, and under the falling of the golden leaves. The light of Lakeside twinkled, a ruddy star, to greet them, and with its brightening ray stole into her heart the first presentiment of Woman's Home.

margin of the whispering pine-wood behind the house, striving to comprehend the change that had come over her, and fit her views of life to harmony with it. In the afternoons she went, at Woodbury's side, to a knoll overhanging the lake, whence the landscape was broader and grander, opening northward beyond the point, where now and then a sail flashed dimly along the blue water. Here, sitting on the grassy brink, he told her of the wonderful life of the tropics, of his early hopes and struggles, of the cheating illusions he had cherished, the sadder knowledge he had wrested from experience, and that immortal philosophy of the heart in which all things are reconciled. He did not directly advert to his passion for herself, but she felt it continually as the basis from which his confidences grew. He was a tender, trustful friend, presenting to her, leaf by leaf, the book of his life. She, too, gave him much of hers in return. She found a melancholy pleasure in speaking of the Past to one who had a right to know it, and to whom its most trifling feature was not indifferent. Her childhood, her opening girlhood, her education, her desire for all possible forms of cultivation, her undeveloped artistic sympathies and their conflict with the associations which surrounded her—all these returned, little by little, and her husband rejoiced to find in them fresh confirmations of the instinctive judgment, on the strength of which he had ventured his love.

In the evenings they generally sat in the library, where he read to her from his choice stores of literature, and from the reading grew earnest mutual talk which calmed and refreshed her mind. The leisure of his long years in India had not been thrown away: he had developed and matured his natural taste for literature by the careful study of the English and French classics, and was familiar with the principal German and Italian authors, so far as they could be known through translations. He had also revived, to some extent, his musty knowledge of the Greek and Latin poets, and his taste had thus become pure and healthy in proportion to the variety of his

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requirements. Hannah had, now and then, perhaps (though
is doubtful, in the circumscribed community of Ptolemy),
countered men of equal culture, but none who had spoken
er as an equal, from the recognition of like capacities in
own mind. She saw, in this intercourse with her husband,
commencement of a new and inexhaustible intellectual
yment. That clamor of her nature for the supposed rights
ied to her sex was, in part, the result of a baffled mental
sion, which now saw the coveted satisfaction secured to
and thus the voice of her torment grew weaker day by

Day by day, also, with scarce a spoken word of love, the
ations between the two became more fond and intimate.
oodbury's admirable judgment taught him patience. He
w the color gradually coming back to the pale leaves of the
wer, and foresaw the day when he might wear it on his
som. The wind-tossed lake smoothed its surface more and
ore, and gleams of his own image were reflected back to him
om the subsiding waves. The bride glided into the wife by
f the household, and Carrie, who was always nervously
xious under the weight of the responsibility, transferred it
lady to her hands. The sense of her ownership in the treas-
res of Lakeside, which had at first seemed incredible, grew
eal by degrees, as she came to exercise her proper authority,
and as her husband consulted with her in regard to the pro-
posed changes in the garden and grounds. All these things
nspired her with a new and delightful interest. The sky of
her life brightened as the horizon grew wider. Her individ-
ual sphere of action had formerly been limited on every side;
her tastes had been necessarily suppressed; and the hard
utilitarian spirit, from which she shrank, in the associations of
her sect, seemed to meet her equally wherever she turned.
Her instinct of beauty was now liberated; for Woodbury
possessing it himself, not only appreciated, but encouraged it
vitality in her nature. The rooms took the impression of her

taste, at first in minor details and then in general arrangements, and this external reflection of herself in the features of her home reacted upon her feelings, separating her by a constantly widening gulf from her maiden life.

The gold of the forests corroded, the misty violet bloom of the Indian Summer was washed away by sharp winds and cold rains, and when winter set in, the fire on the domestic hearth burned with a warm, steady flame. Immediately after the marriage, Woodbury had not only picked out a very pretty site for the cottage which he must now build in earnest for Bute's occupancy, but had immediately engaged masons and carpenters to commence the work. It was on a low knob or spur of the elevation upon which stood his own house, but nearer the Anacreon road. Bute and Carrie were in ecstasies with the design, which was selected from "Downing's Landscape Gardening." It was a story and a half high, with overhanging balconies, in the Swiss style, and promised to be a picturesque object in the view from Lakeside, especially as it would just hide the only ragged and unlovely spot in the landscape, to the left of Roaring Brook. By great exertion on Bute's part, it was gotten under roof, and then left for a winter's seasoning, before completion in the spring. This house and every thing connected with it took entire possession of the mind of Mrs. Carrie Wilson, and not a day passed without her consulting Hannah in regard to some internal or external arrangement. She would have flowered chintz curtains to the windows of the "best room"—blue, with small pink roses: the stuff would be cheap and of course she would make them herself: would it be better to have them ruffled with the same, or an edging of the coarse cotton lace which she had learned to knit? Bute had promised her a carpet, and they could furnish the room little by little, so that the expense would not be felt. "We must economize," she invariably added, at the close: "we are going to lay something by every year, and I want to show Bute that I can manage to have every thing nice and tasty, without spending much."

The little woman still retained her admiration for Hannah, perhaps in an increased degree, now that Woodbury (for whom Carrie had conceived such a profound respect) had chosen her to be his wife. She confided to the latter all her wonderful plans for the future, utterly forgetful how they differed from the confidences which she had been accustomed to bestow. Hannah could not help remarking her present unconsciousness of that ambition which she had once pitied as mistaken, though she had not the heart to check it. A similar change seemed to be taking place in herself. "Is it always so?" she reflected. "Is the fulfilment of our special destiny as women really the end of that lofty part which we resolved to take in the forward struggle of the race? Was my desire to vindicate the just claims of my sex only the blind result of the relinquishment of earlier dreams? It cannot be: but this much is true—that the restless mind is easily cradled to sleep on the beatings of a happy heart."

The strict seclusion of her life was rarely broken. The Waldos and Merryfields came once or twice for a brief call, but Woodbury, though he went occasionally to Ptolemy, did not urge her to accompany him. Sometimes, on mild days, he drove with her over the hills, re-exploring for her the picturesque little nooks of the upland which he had discovered. Hannah was contented with this; she knew that Society awaited her, after a time, but it could not now deny her that grateful repose, in which she gathered strength, and hope, and harmony with herself. Indeed, the life of Ptolemy flowed more quietly than usual, this season. The Great Sewing-Union was not reorganized, because the Cimmerians had decided on a "Donation Party" for Mr. Waldo's benefit, instead of a Fair; the Abolitionists had not sufficient collective power without the assistance of Hannah and Mrs. Merryfield, and prepared their contributions separately at home; and thus only the Mission Fund remained. The latter, however, was stimulated to fresh activity by the arrival of a package of letters, each from a former Miss F in December, from Mrs. Jehiel Preeks (for

Even with regard to the questions which had so nearly kept them asunder, she would have preferred frank discussion to silence. Here, however, he had promised her full liberty of action, and she could not refer to them without a seeming doubt of his word. Once or twice, indeed she timidly approached the subject, but he had avoided it with a gentleness and kindness which she could not resist. She suffered no reproach to rest upon him, in her inmost thought; she reproached herself for having invoked the promise—for having obliged him to raise the thin, impalpable screen which still interposed itself between their hearts. Mrs. Styles, in reporting her visit, had said: "they look as if they had already been married ten years," and she had said truly. That calm, which was so grateful in the first tumult of the wife's feelings, which enabled her to pass through the transition of her nature in peace, now sometimes became oppressive in the rush of happy emotions that sought but knew not how to find expression.

The knowledge that Woodbury had modified his personal habits so as to avoid offending her prejudices, also gave her pain. She learned, from Carrie, that he had been in the habit of drinking a glass or two of claret at dinner, and of smoking in the library after meals, or as he read in the evenings. Now, the wine had disappeared from the table, and he took his cigar in the garden, or in the veranda. Both the habits were still repugnant to her sense of right, but love was beginning to teach her tolerance. He was, perhaps, partly weaned from them, she thought, and in that case it would be wrong in her to lead him back to his old subjection; yet, on the other hand, what sacrifice had he not made for her? and what had she made for him?

Towards the end of winter, she found that her mind was becoming singularly confused and uncertain. The reconciliation with her destiny, the harmony of heart and brain, which she seemed to be on the point of attaining, slid back again into something which appeared to be a disturbance of

temperament rather than of intellect. Things, trifling in themselves, exalted or depressed her without any apparent reason; unreasonable desires presented themselves to her mind, and in this perpetual wavering of the balance of her nature, nothing seemed steady except her love for her husband. She longed, at times, to throw herself upon his breast and weep the confession she did not dare to speak; but her moments of strength perversely came when he was absent, and her moments of cowardice when he was present. Through all the uncertain, shifting range of her sensations, ran, nevertheless, a dazzling thread of some vague, foreboded bliss, the features of which she could not distinguish. She often repeated to herself the song of Clärchen, in Goethe's "Egmont," which was among the works her husband had read with her:

"Blessèd,
Depressèd,
Pensively brooding amain;
Trembling,
Dissembling,
Hovering in fear and in pain:
Sorrowing to death, or exulting the angels above,
Blessed alone is the heart in its love!"

One afternoon she was seized with such an intense longing for the smell of tobacco-smoke, that she could scarcely wait until Woodbury, who had ridden into Ptolemy, returned home. As soon as he had taken off his great-coat and kissed her, as was his wont, she drew him into the library.

"Maxwell," she said, "I have a favor to ask of you."

"Have you? I shall be delighted to grant it."

"You will think it strange," she continued, blushing: "I wish you would light a cigar; I think I should find the smoke agreeable."

"That is not asking a favor, Hannah; it is granting one to me. I'll take one of my best, and you shall have a fair trial."

He laughed pleasantly at what he considered a benevolent effort on her part to endure his favorite indulgence. He

placed easy-chairs for them, on opposite sides of the fire, lest her experiment might fail from being overdone, and lighted one of his choicest Cabañas. The rich, delicate, sedative odor soon pervaded the air, but she held her ground. He took down Sir Thomas Browne, one of his favorites, and read aloud the pleasant passages. The snowy ashes lengthened in the cigar, the flavor of the book grew more choice and ripe, and after an hour he tossed the diminutive remaining end into the grate, saying:

"Well, what is the result?"

"I quite forgot the cigar, Maxwell," she answered, "in my enjoyment of Sir Thomas. But the odor at first—you will laugh at me—was delightful. I am so sorry that you have been so long deprived of what must be to you an agreeable habit, on my account."

"I have only been acting up to my principles," he said, "that we have a right to exercise our individual freedom in such matters, when they do not interfere directly with the comfort of others. But here, I am afraid, Sir Thomas helped to neutralize your repugnance. Shall we go on with him, a chapter and a cigar at a time? Afterwards I can take Burton and Montaigne, if you are not fully acclimated."

He spoke gayly, with a dancing light in his eyes, but the plan was seriously carried out. Hannah was surprised to find in Montaigne a reference to the modern doctrine (as she supposed it to be) of "Women's Rights." It was not a pleasant reflection that the cause had made so little progress in three centuries. The reading of this passage brought up the subject in a natural way, and she could not help remarking:

"Discussions on the subject will never come to an end, until we have some practical application of the theory, which will be an actual and satisfactory test of its truth."

"I, for one, would not object to that," Woodbury answered, "provided it could be tried without disturbing too much the established order of Society. If a large class of women should at any time demand these rights, a refusal to let the

experiment be tested would imply a fear of its success. Now, I do not believe that any system can be successful which does not contain a large proportion of absolute truth, and while I cannot think, as you know, that woman is fitted for the same career as man, I am not afraid to see her make the trial. I will pledge myself to abide by the result."

"If all men were as just, Maxwell, we should have no cause to complain. After all, it is the right *to try*, rather than the right *to be*, which we ask. The refusal to grant us that does not seem either like the magnanimity of the stronger, or even an assured faith in his strength."

"Men do not seriously consider the subject," said he. "The simple instinct of sex dictates their opposition. They attribute to a distorted, unfeminine ambition, what is often—in *you*, Hannah, I know it—a pure and unselfish aspiration. The basis of instinct is generally correct, but it does not absolve us from respect for the sincerity of that which assails it."

"I will try to be as just to you, in return!" she exclaimed. "I feel that my knowledge has been limited—that I have been self-boastful of the light granted to my mind, when it was only groping in twilight, towards the dawn. My heart drew back from you, because it feared a clashing of opinions which could never harmonize."

She was on the verge of a tenderer confession, but he did not perceive it. His words, unwittingly, interrupted the current of her feelings. His voice was unintentionally grave and his brow earnest, as he said: "I trust, more than ever, to the true woman's nature in you, Hannah. Let me say one thing to set your mind at rest forever. It was my profound appreciation of those very elements in your character which led you to take up these claims of Woman and make them your own, that opened the way for you to my heart. I reverence the qualities without accepting all the conclusions born of them. I thank God that I was superior to shallow prejudice, which would have hindered me from approaching you, and thus have *lost me* the blessing of my life!"

He rose and laid away the book. Every word he had said was just and noble, but it was not the fervid, impassioned utterance which her heart craved to hear. There were tears in her eyes, but he misinterpreted them.

Ah, the "true woman's nature!" Did he trust to it? Did he know it, in its timidity, in its exacting fondness, in its pride of devotion and its joy of sacrifice?

Not yet.

19*

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WHICH WE ATTEND ANOTHER MEETING IN FAVOR OF
"WOMEN'S RIGHTS."

EARLY in April, Mr. Isaiah Bemis again made his appearance in Ptolemy. He had adopted REFORM as his profession, and in the course of fifteen years' practice had become a Jack-of-all-trades in philanthropy and morals. He was ready, at the shortest notice, to give an address on Total Abstinence, Vegetarianism (or "Vegetality," as he termed it, with a desire to be original), Slavery, Women's Rights, or Non-Resistance, according to the particular need of the community he visited. He also preached, occasionally, before those dependent religious bodies which spring up now and then in spasmodic protest against church organization, and which are he natural complement of the Perfectionists in Government and Society, who believe that the race is better off without either. In regard to Spiritualism he was still undecided: it was not yet ingrafted upon the trunk of the other Reforms as an accepted branch of the same mighty tree, and a premature adherence to it might loosen his hold on those boughs from which he sucked sustenance, fame, and authority.

By slender contributions from the Executive Committee of the various Societies, and the free hospitality of the proprietors of one or the other, all through the country, Mr. Bemis was in the possession of a tolerable income, which came to him through the simple gratification of his natural tendencies. In his harangue the public was a necessity rather than a temptation. He was well stored with superficial logic wherewith to overwhelm ordinary disputants, while with his hosts, from no opposition was to be expected, he assumed an air of

gant superiority. This was principally their own fault. A man who hears himself habitually called an Apostle and a Martyr, very soon learns to put on his robes of saintship. None of his subjects was bold enough to dispute the intellectual and moral autocracy which he assumed. Thus, for fifteen years, a Moral Gypsy, he had led a roving life through the country, from Maine to Indiana, interrupted only by a trip to England, in 1841, as a "delegate at large" to the "World's Anti-Slavery Convention." During all this time his wife had supported herself by keeping a boarding-house in a small town in New Jersey. He was accustomed to visit her once a year, and at such times scrupulously paid his board during the few weeks of his stay—which circumstance was exploited as an illustration of his strict sense of justice and his constancy to the doctrine of Women's Rights.

Central New York was a favorite field for Mr. Bemis, and he ranged its productive surface annually. His meetings being announced in advance in the *Annihilator*, his friends were accustomed to have all the arrangements made on his arrival. On reaching Ptolemy, however, two or three days still intervened before the meeting could be held, on account of Tumblety Hall having been previously engaged by the "Mozart Ethiopian Opera," and the "Apalachicolan Singers." Mr. Bemis, as a matter of course, claimed the hospitality of the Merryfields in the interval. He was not received with the expected *empressement*, nor were his Orphic utterances listened to with the reverence to which he was used. The other friends of the cause—foremost among them Seth Wattles—nevertheless paid their court as soon as his arrival became known, and (spiritually) on bended knees kissed the hand of the master.

The arrangements for the coming meeting were first to be discussed. Attention had been drawn away from the reform during the previous summer by the renewed agitation in favor of Temperance, and it was desirable to renovate the faded impression. The Rev. Amelia Parkes had been invite^d

but was unable to leave her congregation ; and Bessie Stryker was more profitably engaged in lecturing before various literary associations, at one hundred dollars a night (payable only in gold). Mr. Chubbuck, of Miranda, could be depended upon, but he was only a star of the second magnitude, and something more was absolutely required.

"We must get Miss Thurston—I mean Mrs. Woodbury—again. There is nothing else to be done," remarked Mr. Bemis, drawing down his brows. He had not forgotten that the people of Ptolemy had freely given to her the applause which they had withheld from his more vigorous oratory.

"I rather doubt, as it were," said Mr. Merryfield, "whether Hannah will be willing to speak."

"Why not?" thundered Bemis.

"She's lived very quietly since her marriage, and I shouldn't wonder if she'd changed her notions somewhat."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Seth, drawing up his thick nostrils, "if her husband had forbidden her ever to speak again. If he could bully her into marrying him, he could do that, too."

"You're mistaken, Seth," exclaimed Mr. Merryfield, coloring with a mild indignation, "there's nothing of the bully about Woodbury. And if they two don't love each other sincerely, why, Sarah and me don't!"

"We can easily find out all about it," said Mr. Bemis, rising and buttoning his coat over his broad chest. "Mr. Wattles, will you come with me? We will constitute ourselves a Committee of Invitation."

Seth, nothing loath, put on his hat, and the two started on their errand. It was but a short walk to Lakeside, which they reached soon after Woodbury had taken his customary place in the library, with a cigar in his mouth and a volume of Pepys' Diary in his hand. Hannah sat near him, quiet and happy: she was not only reconciled to her husband's habit, but enjoyed the book and talk which accompanied it more than any other part of the day. On this occasion they were

interrupted by Bute, who announced the visitors in the following style:

"Miss' Woodbury, here's Seth Wattles and another man has come to see you."

Hannah rose with a look of disappointment, and turned towards her husband, hesitatingly.

"Shall I go, also?" he asked.

"I would prefer it, Maxwell; I have no private business with any one."

Bute had ushered the visitors into the tea-room. The door to the library was closed, but a faint Cuban perfume was perceptible. Seth turned towards Mr. Bemis with elevated eyebrows, and gave a loud sniff, as much as to say: "Do you notice that?" The latter gentleman scowled and shook his head, but said nothing.

Presently the door opened and Hannah made her appearance, followed by her husband. She concealed whatever embarrassment she may have felt at the sight of Mr. Bemis, frankly gave him her hand, and introduced him to her husband.

"Be seated, gentlemen," said the latter, courteously. "I would ask you into the library, but I have been smoking there, and the room may not be agreeable to you."

"Hem! we are not—exactly—accustomed to such an atmosphere," said Mr. Bemis, taking a chair.

Woodbury began talking upon general topics, to allow his guests time to recover from a slight awkwardness which was evident in their manner. It was not long, however, before Mr. Bemis broached the purpose of his visit. "Mrs. Woodbury," said he, "you have heard that we are to have a meeting on Wednesday evening?"

"Yes."

"We have been disappointed in getting the Rev. Amelia Parkes, and the advocacy of The Cause is incomplete unless a woman takes part in it. I have therefore come to ask your assistance. We wish, this time, to create an impression."

It was not a welcome message. She knew that such a test

must come, some time; but of late she had been unable to apply her mind steadily to any subject, and had postponed, by an agreement with herself, the consideration of all disturbing questions. She looked at her husband, but his calm face expressed no counsel. He was determined that she should act independently, and he would allow no word or glance to influence her decision.

"It is long since I have spoken," she said at last; "I am not sure that I should be of service." She wished to gain time by an undecided answer, still hoping that Woodbury would come to her assistance.

"We are the best judges of that," said Mr. Bemis, with something of his old dictatorial tone. "I trust you will not fail us, now when we have such need. The interest in The Cause has very much fallen off, in this neighborhood, and if you desert us, to whom shall we look for help?"

"Yes, Hannah," chimed in Seth, "you know we have always looked upon you as one of the Pillars of Progress."

It grated rather harshly upon Woodbury's feelings to hear his wife addressed so familiarly by the ambitious tailor; but she was accustomed to it, from the practice of her sect to bear testimony against what they call "compliments."

"I have not lost my interest in the cause," Hannah answered, after another vain attempt to read Woodbury's face; "but I have freely uttered my thoughts on the subject, and I could say nothing that has not been already heard."

"Nothing else is wanted," said Mr. Bemis, eagerly. "The Truth only gains by repetition; it still remains eternally new. How many thousand times have the same Bible texts been preached from, and yet their meaning is not exhausted—it is not even fully comprehended. How much of the speaker's discourse do you suppose the hearers carry home with them? Not a tenth part—and even that tenth part must be repeated ten times before it penetrates beneath the surface of their natures. Truth is a nail that you cannot drive into ordinary comprehensions with one blow of the hammer; you must pile

disappointed. How gladly would she have yielded to his slightest wish, if he would only speak it! What a sweet comfort it would have been to her heart, to know that she had sacrificed something belonging to herself, even were it that higher duty which had almost become a portion of her conscience, for his sake! The independence which he, with an over-considerate love, had assured to her, seemed to isolate her nature when it should draw nearer to his. His perfect justice crushed her with a cold, unyielding weight of—not obligation, for that cannot coexist with love—but something almost as oppressive. She had secured her freedom from man's dictation—that freedom which once had seemed so rare and so beautiful—and now her heart cried aloud for one word of authority. It would be so easy to yield, so blissful to be able to say: "Maxwell, I do this willingly, for your sake!"—but he cruelly hid the very shadow of his wish from her sight and denied her the sacrifice! He forced her independence back upon her when she would have laid it down, trusting all she was and all she might be to the proved nobility of his nature! Self-abnegation, she now felt, is the heart of love; but the rising flood of her being was stayed by the barriers which she had herself raised.

All the next day her uneasiness increased. It was not only her instinctive fear of thwarting her husband's hidden desire which tormented her, but a singular dread of again making her appearance before the public. She was not conscious of any change in her views on the question of Woman, but they failed to give her strength and courage. A terrible sinking of the heart assailed her as often as she tried to collect her thoughts and arrange the expected discourse in her mind. Every thing seemed to shift and slide before the phantasms of inexplicable fear. Woodbury could not help noticing her agitation, but he understood neither its origin nor its nature. It was tender as ever, and strove to soothe her without admitting to the coming task. It was the only unhappy day known since she had come to Lakeside.

The next morning dawned—the morning of Wednesday—and noon came swiftly as a flash, since she dreaded its approach. The dinner had been ordered earlier than usual, for the meeting was to commence at two o'clock; and as soon as it was over, Woodbury said to her: "It is time you were ready, Hannah. I will take you to Ptolemy, of course, and will attend the meeting, or not, as you desire."

She drew him into the library. "Oh, Maxwell!" she cried; "will you not tell me what you wish me to do?"

"My dear wife," he said, "do not torment yourself on my account. I have tried to fulfil to the utmost my promise to you: have I said or done any thing to make you suspect my sincerity?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing! You have kept it only too well. But, Maxwell, my heart fails me: I cannot go! the very thought of standing where I once stood makes me grow faint. I have no courage to do it again."

"Then do not," he answered; "I will make a suitable apology for your failure. Or, if that is not enough, shall I take your place? I will not promise," he added, smiling, "to go quite so far as you might have done, but I will at least say a few earnest words which can do no harm. Who has so good a right to be your substitute as your husband?"

"Maxwell," she sobbed, "how you put me to shame!" It was all she could say. He took her in his arms, kissed her tenderly, and then drove into Ptolemy.

Tumblety Hall was crowded. The few advocates of the cause had taken good care to spread the news that Mrs. Woodbury was to be one of the speakers, and there was a general, though indefinite curiosity to hear her again, now that she was married. Mr. Bemis rubbed his hands as he saw how rapidly the benches were filling, and observed to Seth Wattles: "The iron is hot, and we have only to strike hard." After the audience had assembled, the latter was chosen Chairman of the meeting, Mr. Merryfield declining, on account of his having so frequently filled that office, "as it were."

listened and applauded, but disappointment has chilled the genial current of our souls. She has sent a subsidy in her place, and he is prepared to await your pleasure, if you will hear the spontaneous vindication."

A movement of surprise ran through the audience, but their disappointment at once gave place to a new curiosity, and a noise of stamping arose, in token of satisfaction. Woodbury, whose demeanor was perfectly serious and collected, in spite of a strong tendency to laugh at Seth, stepped forward to the front of the platform, and, as soon as silence returned, began to speak. His manner was easy and natural, and his voice unusually clear and distinct, though the correctness of his pronunciation struck his hearers, at first, like affectation.

"I appear voluntarily before you, my friends," he said, "as a substitute for one whom you know. She had promised to speak to you on a subject to which she has given much earnest thought, not so much for her own sake as for that of her sex. Being unable to fulfil that promise, I have offered to take her place,—not as the representative of her views, or of the views of any particular association of persons, but as a man who reveres woman, and who owes her respect in all cases, though he may not always agree with her assertion of right. ('Good!' cried some one in the audience.) I stand between both parties; between you who denounce the tyranny of man (turning to Mr. Bemis), and you who meet with contempt and abuse (turning back towards the audience) all earnest appeals of woman for a freer exercise of her natural faculties. No true reform grows out of reciprocal denunciation. When your angry thunders have been launched, and the opposing clouds dissolve from the exhaustion of their supply, the sunshine of tolerance and charity shines between, and the lowering fragments fuse gently together in the golden gleam of the twilight. Let me speak to you from the neutral ground of universal humanity; let me tell you of some wrongs of woman which none of you need go far to see—some rights which each man of you, to whom God has given a help-meet,

may grant beside his own hearth-stone and the cradle of his children ! We Americans boast of our superior civilization ; we look down with a superb commiseration not only upon the political, but the social and domestic life of other lands. Let us not forget that the position which woman holds in the State—always supposing that it does not transcend the destiny of her sex—is the unerring index on the dial of civilization. It behooves us, therefore, in order to make good our boast, to examine her condition among us. We are famed, and perhaps justly, for the chivalrous respect which we exhibit towards her in public ; do we grant her an equal consideration in our domestic life ? Do we seek to understand her finer nature, her more delicate sensibilities, her self-sacrificing desire to share our burdens by being permitted to understand them ?”

The attention of the audience was profoundly enlisted by these words. The calm, dispassionate, yet earnest tone of the speaker was something new. It was an agreeable variation from the anathemas with which they not only did not sympathize, but which they were too indifferent to resent. Mr. Bemis, it is true, fidgeted uneasily in his arm-chair, but he was now quite a secondary person. Woodbury went on to advocate a private as well as public respect for woman ; he painted, in strong colors, those moral qualities in which she is superior to man ; urged her claim to a completer trust, a more generous confidence on his part ; and, while pronouncing no word that could indicate an actual sympathy with the peculiar rights which were the object of the meeting, demanded that they should receive, at least, a respectful consideration. He repeated the same manly views which we have already heard in his conversations with his wife, expressing his faith in the impossibility of any permanent development not in accordance with nature, and his confidence that the sex, under whatever conditions of liberty, would instinctively find its true place.

His address, which lasted nearly an hour, was received with hearty satisfaction by his auditors. To the advocates of the

reform it was a mixture of honey and gall. He had started, apparently, from nearly the same point; his path, for a while, had run parallel with theirs, and then, without any sensible divergence, had reached a widely different goal. Somehow, he had taken, in advance, all the strength out of Mr. Chubbuck's oration; for, although the latter commenced with an attack on Woodbury's neutral attitude, declaring that "we cannot serve two masters," the effort was too sophistical to deceive anybody. His speech, at least, had the effect to restore Mr. Bemis to good humor. Miss Silsbee, a maiden lady from Atauga City, was then persuaded to say a few words. She recommended the audience to "preserve their individuality: when that is gone, all is gone," said she. "Be not like the foolish virgins, that left their lamps untrimmed. O trim your wicks before the eleventh hour comes, and the Master finds you sleeping!"

There seemed to be but a very remote connection between these expressions and the doctrine of Women's Rights, and the audience, much enlivened by the fact, dispersed, after adopting the customary resolutions by an overwhelming majority. "We have sowed the field afresh," cried Mr. Bemis, rubbing his hands, as he turned to his friends on the platform, "in spite of the tares of the Enemy." This was a figurative allusion to Woodbury.

The latter resisted an invitation to take tea with the Waldos, in order to hurry home to his wife. Mrs. Waldo had been one of his most delighted hearers, and her parting words were: "Remember, if you don't tell Hannah every thing you said, I shall do it, myself!"

On reaching Lakeside, Hannah came to the door to meet him. Her troubled expression had passed away, and a deep, wonderful light of happiness was on her face. Her eyes trembled in their soft splendor, like stars through the veil of falling dew, and some new, inexpressible grace clung around her form. She caught his hands eagerly, and her voice came low and vibrant with its own sweetness.

"Did you take my place, Maxwell?" she asked.

He laughed cheerfully. "Of course I did. I made the longest speech of my life. It did not satisfy Bemis, I am sure, but the audience took it kindly, and you, Hannah, if you had been there, would have accepted the most of it."

"I know I should!" she exclaimed. "You must tell me all—but not now. Now you must have your reward—oh, Maxwell, I think I can reward you!"

"Give me another kiss, then."

He stooped and took it. She laid her arms around his neck, and drew his ear to her lips. Then she whispered a few fluttering words. When he lifted his face she saw upon it the light and beauty of unspeakable joy.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN WHICH THE MAN AND WOMAN COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING.

WOODBURY, without having intended it, very much increased his popularity in Ptolemy by the part he had taken in the meeting. His address was marked by a delicate tact which enabled him to speak for Woman, on behalf of his wife, while preserving his own independence of her peculiar views. The men suspected that her opinions had been modified by his stronger mind, and that this was the secret of her non-appearance: they were proud that he had conquered the championess. The women, without exception, were delighted with his defence of their domestic rights; most of them had had more or less experience of that misapprehension of their nature which he portrayed, and the kindness, the considerate justice which dictated his words came very gratefully to their ears. Even Mrs. Hamilton Bue remarked to a neighbor, at the close of his speech: "Well, if he's learned all that from *her*, she's done *some* good, after all!"

Thus it happened that the marriage came to be regarded with favor. Ptolemy not only submitted with a good grace to what was irrevocable, but readily invented a sufficient justification for it. Hannah found a friendly disposition towards her, as she began to mingle a little more with the society of the place: the women, now that they recognized her as one of themselves, approached her more genially and naturally than hitherto, and the men treated her with a respect, under which no reserved hostility was concealed. The phenomenon was adopted, as is always the case, into the ordinary processes of nature.

"American Homestead," with any quantity of cattle and poultry. It is impossible to describe the pride of Mrs. Wilson in this room. One window commanded a cheerful view of the valley towards Ptolemy, while the white front of Lakeside looked in at the other. Bute had surrounded the looking-glass and picture-frames with wreaths of winter-green, which reminded Woodbury of his impromptu ball-room in the Bowery, and in the fireplace stood a huge pitcher filled with asparagus, blossoming lilacs, and snow-balls. It was Mrs. Wilson's ambition to consecrate the house by inviting them all to tea, and a very pleasant party they were.

When the guests had left, and the happy tenants found themselves alone, the little wife exclaimed: "Oh, Bute, to think that we should have a house of our own!"

"Yes," said he, "*'t is* our'n, jist as much as though we owned it, as long as we *think* so. Property's pretty much in *thinkin'*, onless you've got to raise money on it. I know when I'm well off, and if you'll hitch teams with me in savin', Carrie, we can leastways put back all the interest, and it'll roll up as fast as we want it."

"You'll see, Bute," his wife answered, with a cheerful determination; "it's a life that will suit me *so* much better than sewing around from house to house. I'll raise chickens and turkeys, and we can sell what we don't want; and then there's the garden; and the cow; and we won't spend much for clothes. I wish you'd let me make *yours*, Bute; I'm sure I could do it as well as Seth Wattles."

The grin on Bute's face broadened, as he listened to the lively little creature, and when she stopped speaking, he took her around the waist by both arms and lifted her into the air. She was not alarmed at this proceeding, for she knew she would come down gently, getting a square, downright kiss on the way. Never were two persons better satisfied with each other.

At Lakeside there were also changes and improvements. The garden was remodelled, the grounds were extended, and

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fresh consignments of trees and plants continually arrived from the Rochester nurseries. Both Woodbury and his wife delighted in the out-door occupation which these changes gave, and the spring deepened into summer before they were aware; To a thoroughly cultivated man, there is no life compared to that of the country, with its independence, its healthy enjoyments, its grateful repose—provided that he is so situated that his intellectual needs can be satisfied. Woodbury's life in Calcutta had accustomed him to seek this satisfaction in himself, or, at best, to be content with few friends. In Hannah, he had now the eager, sympathetic companion of his mind, no less than the partner of his affections. The newest literature came to him regularly from New York and Boston, and there was no delight greater than to perceive how rapidly her tastes and her intellectual perceptions matured with the increase of her opportunities of culture.

The tender secret which bound them so closely soothed her heart for the time, without relieving its need of the expression of the answer which still failed. His watchful fondness was always around her, folding her more closely and warmly, day by day; but he still seemed to assert, in her name, that freedom which her love no longer demanded—nay, which stood between her and the fulfilment of her ideal union with him. He craved that uncalculating passion which is as ready to give—the joy of mutual demand—and mutual surrender to give—the joy of mutual demand; and the st which filled his The calm, deep, and untroubled trust which he thought, in the was not enough. Perhaps love, shes this form; per- lies secure and steadfast below the tender agitations, sionate impulses, the voiceful yearnings which stir the woman. If so, she must be content; but one thing t yet do, to satisfy the conscience of f love. She must his mind of the necessity of granting her that inde- e which she had ignorantly claimed; she must confess e truer consciousness of her woman's nature; and- mid heart would allow—she must once, though only

once, put in words all the passionate devotion of her heart for him.

The days went by, the fresh splendor of the foliage darkened, the chasing billows of golden grain drifted away and left a strand of tawny stubble behind, and the emerald bunches on the trellises at Lakeside began to gather an amethystine bloom. And the joy, and the fear, and the mystery increased, and the shadow of a coming fate, bright with the freshest radiance of Heaven, or dark with unimagined desolation—but which, no one could guess—lay upon the household. Woodbury had picked up in the county paper, published at Tiberius, a little poem by Stoddard, of which these lines clung to his memory and would not be banished:

"The laden summer will give me
What it never gave before,
Or take from ~~me~~ what a thousand
Summers can give no more!"

Thus, as the approach of Death is not an unmingled sorrow, the approach of Life is not an unmingled joy. But, as we rarely breathe, even to those we best love, the fear that at such times haunts our hearts, chased away as soon as recognized, so to her he was always calm and joyfully confident.

September came, and fiery touches of change were seen on the woods. The tuberose she had planted in the spring poured from their creamy cups an intoxicating dream of the isles of nutmeg-orchards and cinnamon-groves; the strong, ripe blooms of autumn lined the garden walks, and the breath of the imprisoned wine dimmed the purple crystal of the grapes. Then, one morning, there was a hushed gliding to and fro in the mansion of Lakeside; there was anxious waiting in the shaded rooms; there were heart-wrung prayers, as the shadows of the different fates sank lower upon the house, and fitfully shifted, like the rapid, alternate variations of cloud and sunshine in a broken sky. Death stood by to dispute the consummation of life; but, as the evening drew

that knowledge had come now : she had caught one
 of her husband's heart, when he supposed that only
 ear had heard him. In return for that sacred, though
 ntary confession, she would voluntarily make one as
 . The duty of a woman gave her strength ; the dignity
 nother gave her courage.

When the babe was again lulled into quiet, she gently
 : "Maxwell!"

rose, came to the bed, softly put his arms around her,
 id his lips to hers. "My dear wife," he said.
 Maxwell, I have seen your heart," she whispered; "would
 ee mine? Do you recollect what you asked me that
 noon, in the meadows—not whether I loved, but whether
 I'd love? You have never repeated the other question

"There was no need to ask," said he ; "I saw — it answered."
 My dear husband, do you not know that — feeling, in a
 an, must be born through speech, and be — come a living
 instead of lying as a happy, yet anxious weight beneath
 heart? Maxwell, the truth has been on my tongue a
 and times, waiting for some sign of encouragement from
 but you have been so careful to keep the promise which
 ept—nay, almost exacted, I fear—that you could not
 what a burden it had become to me. You have been too
 to me; your motive was generous and noble: I complain
 myself only in having made it necessary. You did right to
 to the natural development of my nature through my
 er knowledge of life ; but, oh, can you not see that the
 lopment is reached? "Can you not feel that you are
 ased from a duty towards me which is — inconsistent with
 ?"

Do you release me willingly, my wife?"
 t coming into his eyes. "I have always
 ied to me by a current against which
 d not resist the last wish of your mother,
 r, alone, have dared to hasten our union.

— he cried, an eag
 s felt that you we
 — you struggled.
 — er, though I sh
 — ion. I would

waited—would have given you time to know your heart—time to feel that the only true freedom for man or woman is reached through the willing submission of love.”

“Ignorant as I was,” she answered, “I might never have come to that knowledge. I should have misunderstood the submission, and fought against it to the last. Mother was right. She knew me better than I knew myself. Maxwell, will you take back your promise of independence? Will you cease to allow that cold spectre of justice to come between our hearts?”

“Tell me why you ask it?” said he.

“Because I love you! Because the dream whose hopelessness made my heart sick has taken your features, and is no more a dream, but a blessed, blessed truth! Ask yourself what that means, and you will understand me. If you but knew how I have pined to discover your wish, in order that I might follow it! You have denied me the holiest joy of love—the joy of sacrifice. As you have done it for my sake, so for my sake abandon the unfair obligation. Think what you would most desire to receive from the woman you love, and demand that of me!”

“My darling, I have waited for this hour, but I could not seem to prematurely hasten it. I have held back my arms when they would have clasped you; I have turned away my eyes, lest they might confuse you by some involuntary attraction; I have been content with silence, lest the voice of my love might have seemed to urge the surrender which your heart must first suggest. Do you forgive me, now, for the pitiless passion with which I stormed you?”

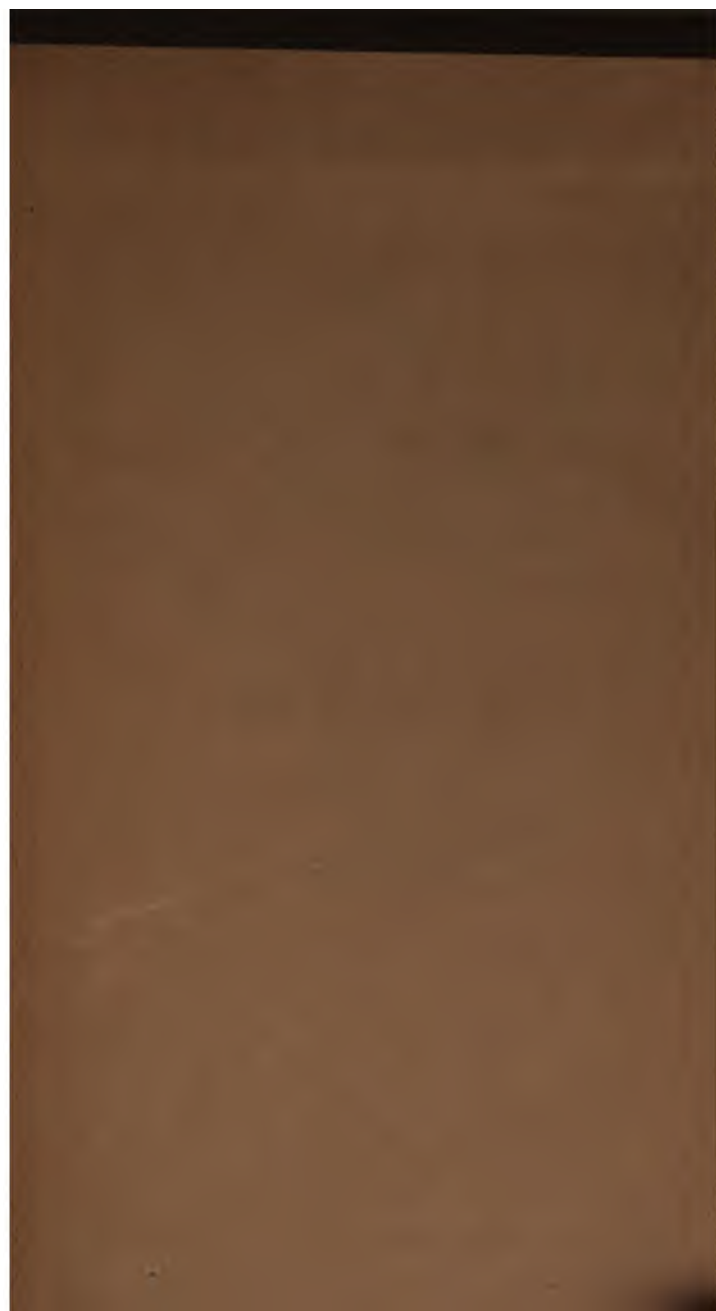
“There is your forgiveness,” she murmured, through her tears, pointing to the cradle.

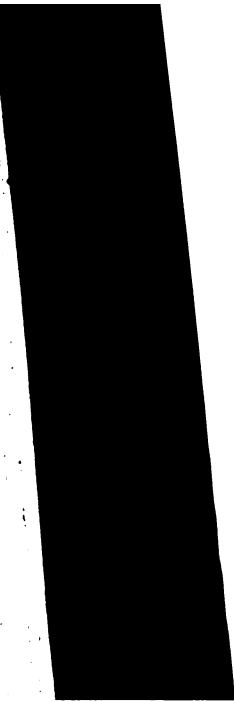
He tenderly lifted the sleeping babe, and laid it upon her bosom. Then he knelt down at the bed, and bent his face upon the pillow, beside her own. “Darling,” he whispered, “I accept all that you give: I take the full measure of your love, in its sacred integrity. If any question of our mutual rights

remain, I lay it in these precious little hands, warm with the new life in which our beings have become one."

"And they will forever lead me back to the true path, if I should sometimes wander from it," was her answer.

THE END.





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Hannah Thurston :

Andover-Harvard

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